

# **The Complexity of Architecture**

*An Analysis of Design Intentions and Theories in the  
Norwegian National Tourist Routes*

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## 1. Introduction

On the final day of my stay in Aurland, a small fjord-side town in Western Norway, I hiked along the steep winding road in hopes to get a better view of the Aurlandsfjord. The road was being renovated in some sections, with noticeable improvements at certain curve look outs. As I reached the top of the road, I came across a ramp jutting directly out from the roadway, over the cliff and even more, over the water. It was built in wood, with a clear glass angled fence at the end. It was both a powerful structure and a minimal object – presenting a near-nauseating view of the fjord but also unnoticeable from the lower town or along the walk up. It was here that I had stumbled across the Stegastein Viewing Platform, one of the most recognized and notorious creations in Norway's National Tourist Route project. With a single structure, the location had produced a memorable experience and an unforgettable view of a fantastic natural phenomenon: the Norwegian fjord (Figure 7).

My initial reaction to Norway's Tourist Route program was surprise. I was surprised not only in the architectural work along the routes, but even more in how they philosophically and intentionally related to nature. I come from the United States where our most famous tourist attraction is the city of Las Vegas. Among other things, Las Vegas is renowned for its own unique type of architecture and nature. 'Sin City' has constructed an overwhelming combination of lights and neon and superstructures that place Roman columns and Egyptian pyramids and Venetian canals and New York skyscrapers and the Eiffel Tower alongside one another in the grandest scale. It beckons tourists with a dolphin pool, rainforests, a lion habitat, botanical gardens, conservatories, aquariums for sharks, a volcano, and numerous fountains in and around the largest hotels in the world. On the other hand, Norwegian architecture along the National Tourist Routes is used in a specific location to highlight its unique landscape. Nature is

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the attraction. In short, the architecture and nature in Norwegian tourism appears to represent a direct contrast to the architecture and nature in American tourism. The former uses architecture to present a unique natural site while the latter uses architecture to mimic other places (Paris, New York, Egypt, Venice, Rome) and create its own destination. Norway presents nature as something to be respected and prioritized while Las Vegas presents nature as something produced, disposable, and easily manipulated. Understanding that I come from the United States, my shock after discovering the Stegastein platform—and then the Norwegian National Tourist Route program—should be no surprise. The result of this contrast was a desire to investigate the Tourist Route program and the ways in which its architecture and design present Norwegian nature.

## 1.1 Research Questions

How does the architecture and design in the Norwegian National Tourist Routes present nature? What can we learn about architecture and culture when examining the design and intention of the Tourist Route sites?

## 1.2 The Norwegian National Tourist Routes

The National Tourist Routes program in Norway is an initiative that combines infrastructure and architecture to highlight Norwegian nature. The Director General of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration Terje Moe Gustavsen states "The aim of the National Tourist Routes project is to provide good driving experiences through unique Norwegian nature" (2010: 8). Jan Andresen, the Project Manager, says the routes offer "the best of Norwegian nature" in a program which ensures "good driving experiences... through mountains, fjords and coastal landscapes" (2010: 12). Specifically, the Tourist Route Project

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followed a 3 year pilot project from 1994 to 1997, after which 3.4 billion NOK (nearly \$620 million) was dedicated to a system of 18 independent routes, each highlighting different Norwegian geographical areas. It was not until 2005 that the official National Tourist Route Project was launched, to be completed in a 15-year span. To support the driving experience, the program created the necessary structures for toilets and rest areas, but encouraged the more than 50 architects, landscape architects, and artists of varying ages and experience to "propose alternatives to the traditional tourist-route architecture, which tends to value function over aesthetic beauty" ("DETOUR": 2011). Gustavsen reinforces this idea when he speaks of the need to adapt buildings to the difficult and variable Norwegian terrain, resulting in architecture that is innovative as well as functional (2010). Therefore, aesthetic character is combined with elements of practical design to aid the driving tourists. This combination makes the Tourist Routes unique. For buildings that are unarguably necessary, the Tourist Route Project has attempted to do something more. The Rector of Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Karl Otto Ellefsen says, "What was initially purely pragmatic has been cultivated into works of architecture that supply their own narrative" (2010: 20).

In their creation, the National Tourist Routes attempt to accomplish a variety of goals. Most commonly mentioned is an aspiration to promote impressive and astonishing Norwegian nature, from its High North coast of Havøysund to its wide horizons in the southern Jæren. To do this, the program uses architecture that has been called "bold and daring", "innovative", "modern", "practical", "pragmatic", "ambitious", "challenging", "empowering", "synthesizing", "iconic" and "stunning" by organizers, commentators and critics alike. The architecture, however, provides functions to the traveler such as rest points, lay-bys, viewpoints, toilets, information, and other practical amenities. It is through this combination of nature and architecture that the project seeks to accomplish

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additional objectives. One is to highlight infrastructure, a point most often elicited by professor and authority on the National Tourist Routes, Janike Kampevold Larsen. "The Tourist Route Project represents the first effort in Norway to include infrastructure in the national iconography" (Larsen 2011: 180). The combination of road use and architectural construction is exhibited in a network of bridges and tunnels that impressively navigate through the difficult Norwegian terrain. Another objective is to help local places and businesses in the rural western areas of the country (Larsen 2011, Andresen 2010). The installations and their worldwide promotion is an attempt to lure national and international tourists to rural Norway, as a way to stimulate economic growth in these smaller locales. A third objective, much related to the promotion of infrastructure and the local areas, is to create *places* in Norwegian nature. The unique architecture attempts to give a name to a specific location, particularly for the passing tourist. It is a goal of the Tourist Route Program to produce structures that reflect their site and setting in a way that combines the distinctive terrain, view, surroundings, and history. Ellefsen says this:

In many situations this cultivation is guided by ambitions to create locations along the route. By this I mean that the project is intended to realize a potential that has always existed, but one that few have seen and few have utilized. The amenities give the location a name and a character (2010: 20).

Therefore, the Tourist Routes and their architecture expose Norwegian nature and design by emphasizing the country's infrastructure, stimulating its rural economy, and creating locations.

### 1.3 Methodology

I will use this section as a way to explain my research and justify the way in which I collected data. My goal is to supply a narrative about my topic and my assumptions in the process, as well as the reasons for acting as I did.

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### 1.3.1 Choice of Methods

As I described in the Introduction, I chose to investigate the architecture in the Norwegian National Tourist Routes, particularly in the way it relates to nature. I was most interested in the intentional design of the sites and the definitive characteristics that make the architecture so compelling. I initially thought the Stegastein platform made me feel the way I felt because the site is sustainable and contrasts so distinctly with my experience in Las Vegas. However, after some reflection, I concluded that the simple experience of an architectural object does not determine a location's sustainability or its relationship to another site. I was mistaken to think I understood anything about sustainability at Stegastein, and any additional research into the concept would have only been an attempt to prove what I had believed. In fact, there is no available data about the carbon emissions of site construction or any other quantifiable environmental information. Defining 'sustainability' is a complication in itself. As a result, I decided against any form of quantitative study. Additionally, although it was a genuine instinctual response, my tendency to compare a Norwegian Tourist Route site with a Las Vegas experience was inadequate and could not reasonably be the foundation of my thesis. The two locations are much too different to compare. A comparative study, in addition to being complicated, could not investigate the aspects of the Tourist Routes I found most interesting. This is not to say I entirely avoided contrasting the character of tourism in both places. My life has been spent in the United States, and so I viewed Norway with an outsider's perspective. I analyzed the Norwegian Tourist Routes in relation to the tourist industries I am familiar with. And so, although this is not a comparative study, I do utilize comparative techniques and observations when they can be useful.

In order to best understand the Tourist Routes, from the initial design to the final product, I have chosen to conduct a qualitative case study. The topic of

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architecture demands a methodology that investigates meaning. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, in a book outlining different strategies for studies, explain how qualitative research is unique because it uses a whole range of methods to interpret the meaning of phenomena (1998). The Tourist Routes lack scientific and quantitative data; but more importantly, such information would not allow for an examination into the intentions of designers and the symbolic presence of the rest stop architecture.

The major strengths of qualitative research follow from its capacity to take in the rich qualities of real-life circumstances and settings. It is also flexible in its design and procedures, allowing for adjustments to be made as the research proceeds. As such it is especially appropriate for understanding the meanings and processes of people's activities and artifacts (Grout and Wang 2002: 199).

Since my research interest dealt with the way architects present nature, a method for understanding processes and seeking opinions was better suited than a method to test a hypothesis.

The components of design incorporate three factors: first is the literature about the subject, the program, the architect, and the site; second is the physical site and the designed object that presently stand; third is specific information on the design decisions, primarily from the architects involved. An appropriate examination of nature in the design of the Norwegian National Tourist Routes must then include:

- 1) Published information, both from the source (Norwegian Public Roads Administration publications) and from within the field (magazines and books exposing and analyzing the architecture).
- 2) Firsthand visits to the locations.
- 3) Personal narratives from those designing or critiquing the projects.

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Specifically, my qualitative research followed this order. My experience of the Stegastein platform occurred in late October, 2011. From that point, I gathered information about the Tourist Routes in every primary and secondary source I could find. The information was limited, and comprised mostly of architecture magazines (available from Oslo School of Architecture), museum books (available from the Norwegian National Museum Library), and the official National Tourist Route website (<http://www.nasjonaleturistveger.no/en>). Even as my research narrowed to the design and its relationship to nature, information was difficult to obtain. Many Norwegians were unfamiliar with the program, or only knew of its basic existence. My experience therefore confirmed the need to expand my resources and my data, recognizing that I could not engage in a valuable investigation with only published sources.

So, in addition to the collection of written material, I performed the 'real' Tourist Route experience – driving a route and stopping at notable architectural rest stops. There are 18 independent routes in the program's entirety, but at the time of my field work, only 12 were completed. Still, these 12 designated routes stretch the entire length of Norway, nearly completely from the Southernmost point to the Northernmost islands. For practical reasons, including time and cost, my research was restricted to two complete routes, driving start to finish and back to start (and therefore, able to drive both directions of the chosen routes). With a willing driver (local inhabitant, Thomas Vestbø), I focused my attention to the road and the rest stops, making notes, drawing sketches, recording voice memos, and taking photos during the drive. My methodology was inspired by the notorious 1964 book, *The View from the Road*. In it, designers David Appleyard, Kevin Lynch and John Myer compiled notes and drawings in an effort to document the aesthetics of highways and the effects of design decisions. Their goal was to highlight how a road could be a work of designed art, and therefore enjoyable for drivers. My situation was slightly different than the three authors of

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*The View from the Road* – I recorded my information in beautiful locations with intended forms and interspersed architecture, while they drove through city highways, often in and around Boston, Massachusetts. In other words, I attended to the roadway recognizing its purposeful and intentional aesthetic, while Appleyard, Lynch and Myer hoped to prove the road's artisanship in some way.

*The View from the Road* says this specifically about its method:

The basic technique used was the one common to all artistic criticism: numerous repetitions of the experience, and its analysis and evaluation both on the spot and from memory. The process was aided by the use of tape recorder, camera, and sketch pad to record momentary impressions. Our conclusions are therefore based largely on the reactions of alert and presumably sensitive and educated observers (1964: 27).

In order to critically observe the roadway and the experience of approaching, entering, resting, then leaving the designed rest areas, my recordings were compiled with a notepad, sketchpad, voice recorder, and camera. Such methods were appropriate not only because I wanted to completely recall the locations, but also because the areas are dynamic designed places that combine sensual elements. I decided that a mere compilation of photos would not effectively represent the experience of the Tourist Routes, which is also the reason I could not conduct adequate research from Oslo's libraries. Simply, a static picture is insufficient for a dynamic progression. A photo is also unable to capture the tactile experience of architecture and a designed space. Therefore, like the authors of *The View from the Road*, I supplemented photography with other methods of recording as I drove the roads and walked the sites.

From beginning to end, and back, I traveled the Hardanger and Ryfylke Tourist Routes, both in the month of July, 2012. The Hardanger route (Figure 1) is composed of three main sections, each separated by ferry. I drove (as passenger) north on National Road No. 13, past the Låtefoss Waterfall, through Odda, and to Kinsarvik, where I took a ferry to Utne. From Utne, I drove southwest on County



Road No. 550, along the fjord coast to Jondal. Another ferry took me to Tørvikbygd, from where I traveled on County Road No. 49 to Norheimsund, and then on County Road No. 7 to Steindalsfossen and then to Granvin.

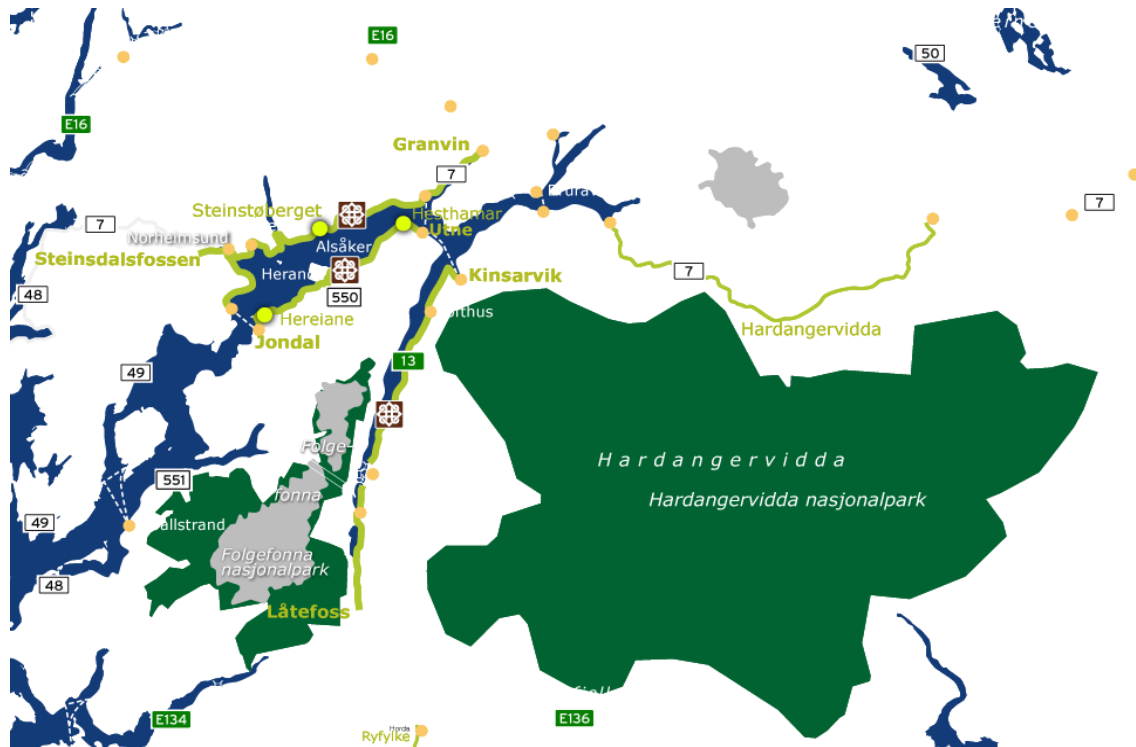


Figure 1: Map of Hardanger National Tourist Route  
<http://www.nasjonale turistveger.no/en/hardanger#map>

Granvin marked the end (or in official reports, the beginning) of the Hardanger Route. From Granvin, I traveled back southwest on County Road No. 7, this time not going to Steindalsfossen but instead directly through Norheimsund to the ferry at Tørvikbygd, from Jondal to Utne, and from Kinsarvik through Låtefossen, on onward. In total, the route is 158 kilometers start to finish (Låtefoss to Granvin).

The Ryfylke route (Figure 2) is south of Hardanger, also along the fjord coast. I began in Håra and drove south on County Road No. 520 through Sauda to Ropeid. Here was a ferry crossing, to Sand, at which point I continued on National Road No. 13, over water with another ferry at Hjelmeland, and then wound south through Tau and Jørpeland, to the end point at Oanes.



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The third and final way I collected information, in addition to reviewing written materials and driving the routes, was through interviews. Since I wanted to focus on the design of the Tourist Routes and their rest stops, it was important to speak with professionals on the matter, instead of other tourists along the routes. I was interested in the intention of the designer and the opinion of the professional critic, rather than travelers' impressions. Therefore, I targeted individuals who had either participated in the design of the National Tourist Routes or had written about the initiative. I understood myself to be limited by the response of the architects (and their busy schedules), and so I sent an interview request—and then a follow-up request, if no reply—to each acting architect and landscape designer I knew to be a part of the National Tourist Route Program (Appendix 1). Unfortunately, I did not have access to any master list, and therefore, my contacts were limited. I received no response from the Norwegian Public Roads Administration and Public Relations officials for the Tourist Route Program, even after repeated information requests. I therefore compiled my own list of architects from magazines and books. Consequently, of the more than 200 built sites, I had no more information than what was published, which accounted for 62 sites. Many architects worked on more than one site, and many of the built sites are simple layoffs that contain no architectural object. Still, my research was restricted by an inability to gain access to all architects and all designers in the Tourist Route Project.

As it was, I sent my initial requests electronically in May 2012, and then my second requests in early August. In the messages, I stated my intention to write a Masters Thesis on the Tourist Routes, my attempt to learn of the intended design and its relation to nature, the lack of outside information about particular sites, and a request to question someone from the firm (Appendix 2). My information depended upon the architect's willingness to assist, and so, I was in no position to interview every architect or even choose precisely who I could question. For this

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reason, my interviews were not comprehensive or intentionally randomized. Ideally, I would have been able to see all built sites and every involved professional, and then select my interviews based on the types of locations and my travels. Instead, I was forced to contact only those designers referenced in published sources, and drive only the most convenient Tourist Routes. The limitation in my access is therefore a limitation in my research. I am not able to testify to the experience of every architectural site, nor the specific ones described in the interviews.

Because the availability of the professionals provided an expected limitation to my research, I attempted to resolve the issue by broadening my sources of information. Out of requests and re-requests to 34 involved architects and landscape architects (Appendix 1), I also contacted two artists in the program, the director of Norwegian Public Roads Administration, three museum directors, four authors, and three academic specialists. A wide range helped to balance not only the ideas of architects, but also the perspective in the research. Instead of being simply an architectural analysis, the Tourist Route program can be analyzed with a cultural, academic, artistic and—by some accounts—critical angle. The limitation of my travels and the restricted availability of the architects meant my thesis would not simply be structured in a way where I visit sites and then ask the specific designers about their space. I provided a more complex analysis that attempts to account for my limitations. I therefore arranged nine interviews. My final interviewee list is as follows: one cultural historian (Brita Brenna), one architectural historian and theorist (Mari Hvattum), one archaeologist and cultural heritage advisor (Liv Marit Rui), one landscape architect (Alf Erlend Støle), one Architecture Museum project manager (Nina Frang Høyum), and four architects (Knut Hjeltne, Tanja Lie, Niels Marius Askim, and Beate Hølmebakk).

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The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured, providing a loose direction for the conversation but allowing my informants to direct the topics as they liked. The interviews with the architects had more structure than the others. My initial interview request supplied the anticipated questions and encouraged the architect to review them, to get comfortable with my interests. Therefore, the architects knew my questions beforehand, and I asked from this same list during the recorded interview. (Appendix 3). My reasoning was this: not only would the preview of questions help the architects become familiar with my intentions, but it also was necessary in case they could not meet in person. Especially for firms located outside of Oslo (where I was living), I encouraged a written or voice-recorded response if they were unavailable for a video interview. I also found it helpful to ask the different architects nearly the same questions, recognizing there would be individual differences between their stories and examples and answers, but still maintaining a structure to better compare the responses. Overall, my strategy was informed by Linda Grout and David Wang's architectural research method, in *Strategy of Qualitative Research* (2012). They propose 4 general characteristics in qualitative research on architects: 1) An emphasis on natural settings; 2) A focus on interpretation and meaning; 3) A focus on how the respondents make sense of their own circumstances; 4) The use of multiple tactics. Additional aspects include being holistic, having prolonged contact, staying open-ended, and analyzing through words (Grout and Wang 2002: 176). Following such guidelines helped me accomplish several things. For one, I was able to accumulate information about the rest areas and their design, as well as about the architects and the character of their firm. The information was invaluable not only for a research question about the design intentions, but also in the way it related to the Tourist Route project as a whole. Information provided through the interviews was not available elsewhere. I therefore accomplished two goals in the process: I received applicable material

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(to analyze, to compare and to weigh against other criticisms) and I prepared this material for the public, as it was not otherwise accessible.

Questions for the non-architects were different, however. There was less structure to the conversation and I did not preemptively solicit the questions to the informants. The reason for this was threefold: firstly, I fully intended to meet these individuals in person and so did not find it necessary to supply an alternative response option; secondly, unlike the architects, these informants had not worked on specific Tourist Route areas, and so the interviews would be absent of all the design intentions, philosophies, and personal anecdotes; thirdly, I was more interested in opinions than professional information about a project. I wanted an interview atmosphere that was less like an interrogation and more like a comfortable conversation in which the informant could speak openly about his or her attitude towards the Tourist Routes.

Although I was open to alternative ways of responding, each interview was conducted in person in Oslo. I conducted every interview in English and recorded with a voice recorder. None of the informants were native English speakers, but their language abilities were exceptionally good and never created a problem. Each architect interview was limited in time and initially set for 30 minutes. However, a natural flow to all meetings meant nothing was rushed, and each meeting ended after 45 minutes. The interviews with non-architects lasted between 45 minutes and 65 minutes. In both cases, I was able to ask every question I wanted of each informant; just as they were able to properly answer. Following the interview, I transcribed each quotation, and only occasionally asked for clarification (with an email message) about a specific name or place.

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### 1.3.2 Reflections on Methodology

From the earliest ideas for this thesis, I sought to demonstrate how Norwegian architecture is distinct. Because of my experience at Stegastein, I desired to explain the reasons why design in Norway is special, particularly along the Tourist Routes. However, it soon became obvious that I had predetermined my conclusion, even before writing. My goal then shifted. I decided to do a closer examination, not just of my experience, but of architecture along the Tourist Routes. I determined it would be best to critically evaluate intention in design, and the way this relates to the user. With this decision, I entered into a discourse that was much more complex than I anticipated. I did not feel I could speak about experience without noting design; but how could I talk of design without considering the architect; and where is the architect if not situated in a culture; and can I even speak of architecture in a way that presumes its influence? All of these questions entangled themselves into a web that stretched from intention to feeling to influence to control, with interesting connections to art, literature, philosophy, and culture. The result was a broadness that reached far beyond my initial and simplistic focus of Tourist Route architecture and nature.

Several items contributed to the shift from a narrow topic to one that dips into several academic areas and interests. One, which I mentioned in the previous section, involved the availability of information. My inability to speak with specific architects or visit certain sites forced me to readjust my intention, just like the lack of quantitative information directed me away from Tourist Route 'sustainability'. But also, once I began to interview, it became clear that architecture does not exist in isolation. It was ignorant to suppose I could simply answer a question about design intention; and it was equally idealistic to even try and ask such a question. One complicating issue that emerged was the role of the architect, as compared to the users of the architectural object. There was no way to speak only about a site's plans, while entirely ignoring the visitors to that site.

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In particular, my attempt to speak about nature consistently turned into a conversation about how humans experience nature, which would lead into any number of topics, from a location's practical problems and attempted solution to the architect's priorities and philosophy. Additionally, a change occurred when I spoke with individuals who were not architects, but who had information or wrote about the Tourist Route program. These other informants had interpreted the Routes to mean different things and to be part of other discourses that I had not considered. For instance, Brita Brenna referred to a power play on the part of the Norwegian government; Liv Marit Rui spoke of the politics of roads and maintenance; Mari Hvattum explained viewing traditions throughout history. All of the insights demonstrated that the Tourist Routes had different meanings to different individuals. It was then that I decided to not only investigate the Tourist Routes, but also examine the issue of meaning and interpretation. This discourse involved a more philosophical perspective that considered architecture in relation to human freedom. I determined during my first interviews that the Tourist Routes in Norway seem to exist as a balance, because each time I attempted to fully explain or entirely generalize the Routes, I discovered I was wrong. For example, I initially tried to explain the Tourist Routes as a demonstration of Norwegian control: The government built specific roads through specific areas with specific sites, so as to very directly lead automobile tourists through a choreographed version of their nature. In one sense, this is not an absurd position. A road is a way to control an automobile, and the sites are constructed to a designated location with funding from the Norwegian government. However, were the roads built for this tourist program? Can a government control an automobile? Did the architects have freedom in their site design? Were there practical and safety issues involved as well? Do roads even restrict automobiles? The answers to many of these questions can be found in the following pages of this thesis. Most importantly, however, my research focus changed when I realized many answers to these questions are *yes and no*. In this case, answers can



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ask additional questions. I believe the topics and style of this thesis reflect such a wide-ranging analysis. My thesis' structure and content could be simpler and more direct. However, I think this would fail to demonstrate what my research so quickly became – namely, a complicated analytic web. My questions about architecture led me to theories on architecture, just as my questions about design led me to philosophies about intention. Overall, these examples reinforce why I used a qualitative case study methodology, since I was seeking to find meanings and explanations in a topic of much complexity. In the next section, I will show some of this complexity, as I attempt to speak of architecture in a way that is comprehensible and without abstract assumptions. I will address some theoretical topics that enable a discourse about architecture.

## 1.4 Theory

Architecture exists between two relatively extreme positions. On the one hand, it can be understood as the most simply built structures – shelters and lodges with walls and a roof, used for anyone and anything. On the other hand, architecture can represent the most prominent engineering marvels that reach higher than any other built object in the history of the world. The same term is used to label some of the most basic as well as the most complicated structures. Historians and critics have offered their own opinions about what precisely architecture is, but for the sake of simplicity, I often disagree with their conditional definitions. Unlike the art historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, who famously stated "A bicycle shed is a building, Lincoln Cathedral is architecture" (Pevsner 1958: 23), I use the term architecture to mean two things, depending on its usage. First, architecture is *the practice of designing and constructing buildings*. When one 'does' architecture, the process is not merely hammering nails into wood, but also the act of design. This notion becomes slightly complicated because architecture

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does not necessarily require both design and construction. In the case of some famous and highly-regarded architects, such as the late Lebbeus Woods, the design is not realized in a built object. Such is the also the case for firms who enter ubiquitous commission competitions, many with hopes to gain notoriety. 'Architecture' does not only exist after a designer wins and his or her structure is complete. However, since the architecture of Norway's National Tourist Routes solely involves designed and built structures, there is no need to further examine this issue. Second, in addition to the practice of designing and constructing buildings, architecture is also *a style of a building*. This definition is required because it embodies the normative usage of the word. If a pedestrian notes the architecture of the Seattle Public Library, he or she is speaking of the building's style. Pevsner's renowned claim (1958) is often understood to mean only this second definition, so he says Lincoln Cathedral qualifies to possess a style, while the shed is so simple, it fails to reach this threshold. I align with author and architecture critic Paul Goldberger who says the two are each buildings as well as architecture – both designed and both with a style, representative and impactful on a culture and an environment (Goldberger 2009: 3).

Goldberger's position raises an additional point, however, which is essential not because of the conclusion but because of the presuppositions. If we talk about architecture, we need more than a definition. The issue I take with Pevsner, as well as with Goldberger, is the unjustified presumption that architecture *is something* and *can do something*, and that it exists as an embodied representation of a place. It is this attitude, I believe, that separates those who are interested in architecture (Group X) from those who find it inaccessible and incomprehensible (Group Y). I also believe this gap is incompatible if left unaddressed. The gap, and therefore the problem, is the way one group (Group X) engages in discourse about meaning, intention, space, form, and ornament, while the other group (Group Y) believes quite bluntly *it is just a building*. My goal is not to convert

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every uninterested observer, but rather to provide an arena in which a discussion can take place. Architecture is not only beyond some threshold of quality or excellence, and it does not necessarily embody the sentiment of a culture. I instead present architecture—its process and its style—as something simple but able to perform. In saying it can *perform*, I mean plainly that architecture can do something beyond just *being a structure*. Architects may presuppose this notion, but I recognize the benefit of providing some theory and literature behind such assumptions. The theory, then, can be separated into three sections: that architecture can say something, that architects are attempting to say something, and that architecture, as a result of these architects, can do something.

#### **1.4.1 Architecture Can Say Something**

To begin, it is important to enter briefly into the philosophical issue of 'statement'. A statement is defined and generally understood to be an expression of something in speech or writing. The implication is that words are required to make any kind of statement. However, it is precisely this notion that the French philosopher and 'intellectual historian' Michel Foucault contradicts in his 1972 book, *Archaeology of Knowledge*. In it, Foucault defines a statement as something not merely linguistic and not simply a sentence.

We will call *statement* the modality of existence proper to that group of signs: a modality that allows it to be something more than a series of traces, something more than a succession of marks on a substance, something more than a mere object by a human being; a modality that allows it to be in relation with a domain of objects, to prescribe a definite position to any possible subject, to be situated among other verbal performances, and to be endowed with a repeatable materiality (Foucault 1972: 107).

Although some of the language is overly philosophical and some of the ideas are entrenched in other complex arguments, it is still clear to see not only what a

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statement *is*, but even, what it *is not* (or at least, what it is *not only*). If we understand this much, the quote demonstrates how a statement is not only a "series of traces", a "succession of marks", or an "object by a human", but can be something more. This notion develops several pages later, when Foucault says, "The analysis of statements can never confine its attention to the things said, to the sentences that were actually spoken or written, to the 'signifying' elements that were traced or pronounced" (1972: 109). At this point, statements are not just words or expressions from humans, and also cannot be analyzed only according to sentences and writings. The reason is this: to consider statements as only *things said* and to analyze them as such does not consider the other conditions that give the statement meaning. Although it is possible to embody meaningfulness into the simple spoken word, there are also circumstances that make words meaningless – namely, when they were spoken out of context or from a different date than their original form (Foucault 1972: 27). Meaning, therefore, requires an understanding of the situation and the circumstance to and from which a statement originates. Such explains Foucault's rather startling proposition, "The analysis of statements, then, is a historical analysis, but one that avoids all interpretation" (1972: 109). There are conditions necessary for meaning. So the issue is not to determine and evaluate what a statement is hiding or 'trying' to say (Foucault 1972: 109), but instead to recognize the true existence of the statement according to the conditions for it.

*The Archaeology of Knowledge* clarifies the argument in his previous book, *The Birth of the Clinic*, which says observation can produce items irreducible to their original conditions. With the example of the asylum, Foucault proposes how the idea of being 'insane' is not produced directly from an individual's isolated state, but rather from the location and situation. In other words, from perception (note the entire title, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*) comes new statements (1963: 56). A human with the same characteristics

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(Foucault's favorite example being the madman) is viewed and classified differently in distinct regions and across history. Therefore, Foucault is using an observation and its product—statements—in discourse. Paul Hirst, a British sociologist and political theorist, notes why this is so unique. Typically when things are not words, they are not considered statements but only objects in an analysis. Foucault however is considering his perception and examination to be statements, and then using these items as part of the discourse and not only subjects of the discourse (Hirst 2005: 157). By using Foucault's model, one can integrate the discourse about something, the theory influencing something, the practice of doing something, and the products that result from the three items.

We can consider constructed objects as components of a discursive formation, and relate the practices of the construction, inclusion and exclusion of objects to the rules and patterns of such formations. In this way we can bridge the gap between theory in architecture and spatial constructs, not merely by treating constructs as examples of theory, but examining how discourses enter into construction and how in consequence buildings or planned environments become *statements* (Hirst 2005: 158).

For this section, the original and critical concept to understand from Foucault is how non-written and non-spoken objects can also be statements. Objects can express ideas. Therefore, buildings and spaces have the ability to say something. This is possible, but not assured. Logically, it does not follow from the formation {{ a) Statements are not just written b) Architecture is not written}} that {{ c) Architecture then is a statement}}. Rather, the logical conclusion is that architecture can be a statement. It also must be noted how Foucault does not speak about architecture in the quoted formulations. Therefore, the connections made between his work on *statements* and our notion of architecture is done outside his examples in *Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. But as we will see later, there are other instances where Foucault connects his philosophy to architecture.

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### 1.4.2 Architects are Saying Something

If the previous section is understood at its foundation to support how architecture can say something, then it is necessary to make an additional link to the architect and the design of a building. Although occasionally referenced in the previous section, the connection between the architect and the architecture has yet to be solidified. In one case, architecture could be understood as being distinct from the architect: not only in the simplest of contrasts—one is a building and the other is a human—but also in an evaluation of causation. Even if we conclude that architecture can say something, is there any reason to believe this statement can be deduced by speaking with the architect? Or in a similar vein, is there any way to escape the old issue of intention?

First, let us address the question of intention. When considering the meaning of a created work, critics in the field of art, architecture, and especially literature have frequently considered intentionality. In the literary realm, for instance, theorists have debated whether the author's intentions are accessible when reading and understanding a book. Some, like W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley (1954), argue why intention is unimportant to a reader's own analysis. Others, like Roland Barthes (1967 in Grant 2008), state how the reader's perspective is more important than even the author because it can provide meaning that only subconsciously emerges from the book's creator. Still others, often editors, will follow the philosophy of Fredson Bowers who elevates the author's objective as the sole and superior criterion (in Tanselle and Battestin 1993). The questions then relate to how much original meaning can be accessed from a creation: what can the reader deduce indirectly; and to what degree is this important?

If one happens to align with contemporary literary theorists, then the architecture is the only source for meaning, thereby removing the architect entirely. However, a strong position of this sort eliminates not only design intention from the

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product, but the design itself. Since it lacks any consideration for the design, a heavy deconstructivist or post-structuralist perspective (both which ignore the designer's intention and supplant my own interpretation) would appear to be disrespectful and arrogant. With that said, there is still a requirement to connect the architect to the architecture. Foucault can help to resolve the problem.

If objects can be statements, as Foucault proposes in *The Birth of the Clinic* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, then objects are also involved in the rules that govern discourse. The character of the object, its circumstance and existence as related to other *statements*, is then part of a discourse. What this means, and the central thesis of Hirst's argument, is the theory and design involved in an object is the object's *statement* (2005:158). There is no separation or 'gap' between the theory on one hand, and the construction on another (Hirst 2005: 168). All is unified in what Foucault calls "The Unities of Discourse" (1972: 21-30). Here is the conclusion from Hirst: "If Foucault is of use it is because he supersedes these issues of author-intentions and influences-structure. This enables us to pose questions not merely about discourses *on* architecture, but discourses *in* architecture" (2005: 158). Both writers attempt to get beyond precisely the intention issue that defines many modern literary critics. The result is a connection between the architect, his or her design, and product of the design. Architecture therefore can say something, and architects influence that statement.

However, it would be incorrect to believe that meaning and symbols in architecture are only accessible through the designer. Just as the architecture does not exist in isolation, such is the same for the architect. In other words, although the product is not separated from a purposefully-designed set of symbols and functions and meanings, access does not require a lesson from every working designer. Architecture, after all, can be a most public medium, necessarily incorporating civilians in the experience. This is especially true for the National Tourist Route Program in Norway.

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We have finally reached the equilibrium point – where the frequent suppositions have been exposed. When designers, critics, and people within the profession speak of the architect's role, they speak with the assumptions that architecture can say something, architects are trying to say something, and therefore an inanimate, nonverbal product can possess a designed meaning. The previous argument would complicate itself if architects were unaware of their connection to the buildings they design. Fortunately this is not the case. The result, then, is an interrelation: speaking to designers can give insight into the final product, and similarly, analyzing the final product can give insight into the design. Only with the previous evidence can one be justified in asking a designer "What does this symbolize" or commenting about a stairway "I see what the architect is trying to do here". An extended connection appears to exist.

### **1.4.3 Architecture Can Do Something**

Before addressing what exactly architecture can do, a short background is necessary. In particular, there is a need to explain my own formulation regarding the difference between the plane of *as is* and the plane of *means to be*. It seems to me that objects contain meaning if the viewer is able to transcend the first and technically obvious plane of *object-as-it-is*. Literature is a simple example of this. In order to grasp the meaning in a text, the reader needs to move beyond the individual letters, and then even, beyond the individual words. This is not to say the letters, words and pages are non-existent. Rather, meaning requires an additional understanding of the items—on a different level (or 'plane' as I used earlier). The same can be said about a painting, where on the one hand it is indeed merely slaps of oil or pigment on a canvas. Still, moving beyond—or at least accommodating—the *as is* allows the viewer to address themes, ideas, symbols and meaning that are not fully accessible otherwise. To make matters interesting, some writers and artists have played on this transcendence in their



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work, particularly experimental authors like André Breton (1960, 1987), Raymond Roussel (1974), J.M.G. Le Clézio (2008), and artists Paul Klee (in Jordan 1984), Suzuki Yoshinori (in Chong 2012), and Damien Hirst (in Gallagher 2012). Others recognize and then exploit the tendency to look past the object towards a meaning. Artists like Mark Rothko, whose infamous dual-color paintings show nothing more than colors on canvas, and therefore use abstraction to create a reaction. He, however, forever denied he was a colorist or an abstract artist, further confusing the question of meaning (Chave 1989: 25-29). Another example is the American minimalist painter Frank Stella, who says the following in an interview with Bruce Glaser:

If you pin them down, they [the people who want to retain painting's old values] always end up asserting that there is something there besides the paint on the canvas. My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen is there. It really is an object. Any painting is an object and anyone who gets involved enough in this finally has to face up to the objectness of whatever he's doing. He is making a thing. ... What you see is what you see (Glaser 1968: 157).

Like Rothko, Stella appears to create paintings that exist outside of the *means to be* plane. Unlike Rothko, Stella admits precisely that. Rothko either fails to accept or enjoys to complicate the difference between what influences his art and how his art influences others. No matter the position, the larger issue is the unavoidable reality that paintings, like architecture, are seen and experienced by others. Especially when the experienced item moves past the *as is* to the *means to be*, the viewer is a part of the analysis. He or she is interpreting the symbols and attributing significance to the artistic or architectural forms. In reality, meaning may start with the creator, but it depends on the onlooker. The meaning arises, not necessarily because it is precisely what the painter or architect envisions, but arguably because of a natural process. A human being is more comfortable with meaning than he or she is with abstraction (Broadbent 1980, Gage 1993, Choo 1996, Proulx et al 2010). It is why two dots above a 'U' shape is seen as a smile

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(Rovamo et al 1997) or a blurred photo called a eigenface, without recognizable eyes and ears, is still understood as a face (Turk 1991). It is as much about habits as it is about natural and historical characteristics. Claude Levi-Strauss uses the example of kinship in his 1963 book *Structural Anthropology*. He notes how the universal character of a kin does not occur because of a biological or bloodline relationship amongst a group of humans. It is instead a concept created in the consciousness of humans as "an arbitrary system of representations" (Levi-Strauss 1963: 50). Alan Colquhoun also relates to the natural tendencies of people when he generalizes that since primitive times, all humans have reworked the world into coherent and logical systems for understanding. The meanings we give to images, shapes and experiences are not obvious in their forms alone. His example is a Wassily Kandinsky painting, whose forms are—by themselves—highly unintelligible (Colquhoun 1967: 11-13).

The observer, therefore, is generally understood to be imperative in the interpretation of not just art and architecture, but the world as a whole. Patterns in nature as well as in painting, symbols in body language as well as in architecture: all of these are in one sense presented to—and in another sense comprehended by—the viewer. The idea is quite related to the intentionality discussion in the previous section. There is a tendency to analyze a work of art according to the painter, and then according to the viewer, and then work to mediate the two. This is exactly the goal of Anna C. Chave in her aforementioned book *Mark Rothko: Subjects in Abstraction* (1989). However, I mention intention not to reintroduce the issue, but instead to turn it over. As it is currently presented, a creation (whether art or architecture or literature) contains a certain amount of symbol, meaning, and designed intention. The viewer in this formulation then works to access and make sense of the work. In short, an acting viewer interprets the work, to more or less an 'accurate' degree. This relationship, however, fails to provide the whole story. What if instead, the creation impacts

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the viewer? What if it is not so much a human interpreting meaning, but rather, a human receiving meaning and symbols from the work? What if—and this is essential—the agency is not within the viewer to decide, but within the created object to *do*: as if architecture can do something?

Precisely this inverted presentation of agency can be found in the work of philosopher, sociologist, and science historian Andrew Pickering. In his book, *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency & Science* (1995), Pickering investigates the components of academic and philosophical practice, paying close attention to the assumptions and implications regarding time and agency. The introduction demonstrates the way in which Pickering wants to reinterpret science: not as simply representational, but also performative. By this, he means science is often thought of as merely 'representing' nature, stocking a *knowledge* that mimics and essentially photographs natural beings and systems. There is however, according to Pickering, another way of understanding scientific practice:

One can start from the idea that the world is filled not, in the first instance, with facts and observations, but with *agency*. The world, I want to say, is continually *doing things*, things that bear upon us not as observation statements upon disembodied intellects but as forces upon material beings (Pickering 1995: 6).

Although Pickering is speaking specifically about science and does not make the point for architecture, I believe there are enough parallels to relate the two. His argument is not that there are no representations occurring in science, but how there is a balance. The talk of science combines the agency of scientists with the agency of the natural world they study. The same can be said of architecture. There is a way to understand architecture as partly *acting upon*- (material agency) and partly *being interpreted by*- (human agency) the viewer. Pickering asks the reader to address the agency that materials can possess. The result, according to him, is a balance: "Human and material agency are reciprocally and emergently intertwined" (Pickering 1995: 21). It is from this understanding that

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we can finally present the potential for architecture to act, particularly on humans. Architects imagine their work to impact any human who might be seeing it from afar or entering it from above or studying it in a magazine. The idea is not only that the architecture is making a statement and that the architect is a part of that statement, but that the designed building and space has agency to make the viewer feel, think, or even act in a certain way.

The examples of architectural agency are abundant in the writings of both philosophers and theorists, in addition to architects. A good place to start is with stories from and about individuals. Frank Lloyd Wright is infamous for his desire to influence the humans who move through his buildings. He designed characteristically small, low, and confined entrances which then dramatize the deeper spaces, not only in his houses but in his larger works like the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. This exemplifies recognition of space and movement, and what Goldberger deems "a desire to control that movement as best he could, like a director pacing the story as it unfolds" (2009: 126). There is also legend that Wright said he could build a house for newlyweds and cause them to divorce within weeks (Orr 2002: 136). In another related example, Caroline Hansens, of the Danish design bureau Regionales, justifies a particular bar design this way:

If there is something a bit solemn to a place, people won't bang their fists in the tables and empty their glasses in one sip, but behave in a different manner. We like to demand something from our audience – beauty generates beauty (Hansens).

If Wright is thinking on a medium scale and Hansens on a small scale, then the architect Giovanni Klaus Koenig considers his design's influence on a large scale. By his estimate, if he designed a district in which ten thousand people lived and occupied, then he would influence all ten thousand of those people. The influence would be "more profound and prolonged than some verbal injection, such as 'Sit down!'" (Koenig 1964: 28). Each of these architects and

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designers speaks about and works with the idea that their creations can control the perception, the feeling, and the behavior of people. Simply put by Hirst, "The task of the architect is not merely constructing spaces, but spaces which have specific expressive-experiential effects on the subject" (2005: 162).

A specific theory about architecture's role of impacting people can be found in biophilia, or more precisely in biophilic design. Biophilia is a theory which implies that human beings have a natural tendency to affiliate with nature and other life forms. Biologist Edward O. Wilson introduced the theory in 1984 in his book of the same title. If Wilson is correct, there is an incentive for architects to design spaces to provide natural settings and living connections for the people. Architecture can do something in this case to enable human access to a biological necessity. In arguing why biophilic perspective is essential to human well-being, *Biophilic Design: The Theory, Science and Practice of Bringing Buildings to Life* (Kellert, Heerwagen & Mador 2011) presumes how nature impacts people. The book argues in favor of designs that emphasize this influence.

From the present theoretical point, the typical discourse about architecture (in the aforementioned Group X) can be justified. There is no more 'gap' between architectural discourse and the discourse within this thesis. My goal has not been to prove the accuracy of these theories or assumptions. Rather, from them I hoped to reach a place for intelligible discussion. Although I work within the aforementioned theories, this is because the sites I studied, the architects I interviewed, and the critics I researched did so as well. A meaningful analysis takes place with the assumptions that architecture can say something, architects are saying something, and architecture can do something. This is not to say buildings necessarily have meaning and influence, or the designer is effective in communicating a message. However, the potential for this to occur is the foundation for a significant examination.

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## 2. Historical Background

From the landscape to the architecture, with the local and the infrastructure, the objectives of Norway's Tourist Route program involve multiple factors, many of which relate to a history and a tradition. This Tourist Program of Norway encompasses a historical tradition that is twofold. In one way, there is a history of landscape and viewing the landscape, which involves concepts about beauty and the idea of nature. By incorporating a route, landscape tradition is most commonly used by historians to compare the National Tourist Routes. In another way, there is a history of architecture. Buildings and built objects are involved in an interconnected space of time that has a history of its own. What architecture does and what architecture means therefore cannot be isolated from a historical tradition and narrative.

### 2.1 Landscape

Although it is common to relate and interchange the term *landscape* with similar words like *environment* or *geography*, there is in fact a character to *landscape* that makes it unique. In short, the notion incorporates not merely the land and specific geological aspects, but also humans. People's relation to the land, be it symbolic or cultural, is definitive when we refer to a region's landscape. It therefore is helpful to consider the definition in the introduction of *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*: "A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolizing surroundings" (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988: 1). Landscape is not simply a topographic area, but more. To support this, consider the term's history. The word *landscape* has its origins in the Modern Dutch word *landschap*, used in the 16th century by Dutch artists, particularly painters. For the

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English during the 16th and 17th centuries, landscape meant 'a picture representing natural inland scenery, as distinguished from a sea picture, portrait, etc' (Simpson 1989). As the Dutch incorporated the English notion of landscape, the result was an expression that combined a 'tract of land' with an artistic 'picture depicting scenery on land'. (The American Heritage Dictionary 2001). To this day, landscape has a multitude of meanings and connotations, their interaction demonstrating the complexity of the term. Jala Makhzoumi and Gloria Pungetti summarize the situation in the early parts of their book *Ecological Landscape Design & Planning* (1999):

Landscape preserves a wide spectrum of meanings, ranging from a general perspective (e.g. countryside) to a distinct geographical definition (e.g. district, region, estates). It also can imply cultural and political situations. People indeed have used the word landscape in different ways, according to different points of view. Four major perspectives can be identified: landscape as scenery, as a specific place, as an expression of culture, and as a holistic entity (4).

The origins of the word and its usage from the past to the present are evidence of a relationship between humans and land. It therefore should be no surprise that the subjective and interpretive ideas of landscape have evolved. Human perspectives have changed since the 17th century, and with it, the definition of this interrelated term.

### **2.1.1 History of Landscape**

The way humans have viewed landscapes has changed throughout history, as a result of changing culture, religion, tradition, and technology. J. Douglas Porteous, a historian focusing on historical geography and urban studies, notes several examples of these changes in his book *Environmental Aesthetics: Ideas, Politics and Planning* (1996). One instance is the change in perception that resulted from Christianity's emergence in fourth-century Rome. From this, Porteous says, humans were able to distinguish themselves from nature and a

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natural process, as well as exploit it without fear of punishment; the result was a loss in what he terms "environmental humility" (1996: 51). Another example regards Medieval citizens, to whom nature was massive and disturbing, and mountains were imposing and unknowable. There was little motivation to climb, explore, and discover (Porteous 1996: 52-53). From this view of nature, a major and modern shift occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> century which founded current landscape tastes. Historians commonly cite how present ideas of lawns, parks, tourism, nature, and scenery can be traced to this transition in the 1700s, especially in Europe (Hvattum 2012, Larsen 2008, Porteous 1996). Land was turned into leisure land and agricultural areas. There was what nature historian Peter Coates terms the 'privatization of nature', as evidenced by the conversion of woodland into hunting and game areas (1998: 115).

The first use of 'picturesque' came from Joseph Warton's 1756 *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, wherein he alludes to a painting being sufficient representation of nature<sup>1</sup>, and notes character traits of people and profiles<sup>2</sup>. As its origins regard art, the notion of the picturesque was notably expounded upon a half-century later when the priest and traveler William Gilpin wrote *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape* (1792). Gilpin announces in his first essay how he intends to elucidate the difference between the beautiful and the picturesque (1792: 4). Specifically, the main distinction is found in texture:

[T]he ideas of neat and smooth, instead of being picturesque, in reality strip the object, in which they reside, of all pretensions to picturesque beauty. Nay, farther, we do not scruple to assert, that roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful, and the picturesque (Gilpin 1792: 6).

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, on pages 44, 56, 142 and 321.

<sup>2</sup> For example, on pages 13, 25 and 28.



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Later in his essay, however, Gilpin entangles picturesque, sublime, and beautiful, concluding there is no simple distinction between the terms (1792: 42). Due to this confusion, it helps to consider Edmund Burke's definitive 1757 work, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*. In comparing the sublime with the beautiful, Burke says this:

For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation; beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure (1757: 237-238).

Therefore, let us consider three types of landscape: the beautiful (a calm, tame agricultural landscape), the sublime (a strong, awesome, vast landscape), and the picturesque (a mysterious, surprising, and variable landscape: positioned between the strength of the sublime and the gentle of the beautiful). I provide the short definitions in order to clarify the terms, while still understanding that each has an extended and somewhat complicated history. In order to put the landscape terms in a chronological context, the following summary from Porteous can be of use: "Among the elite, the notion of the sublime had died by the end of the eighteenth century, the picturesque by the early nineteenth century, and the Romantic after the mid-century" (1996: 73).

The time period following the mid-nineteenth century was what academics and historians label *the back to nature movement* (Boyer 1986, Porteous 1996, McKibben 2007). Nature was no longer synonymous with danger and fear; the foundations for our modern notion of landscape were laid; and humans further addressed the environment in mental and physical realms. Christine Boyer, an urban historian and professor, states the following: "The back to nature

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movement, which spread across the urban mentality of the late nineteenth century, valued woodlands and meadows for their spiritual impact; they were places of simple virtues and pleasures on the edge of urban disquietudes and troubles" (1986: 34). The movement is important in the way it highlights nature – or better put, the idea of nature. Throughout history, humans have thought about their natural environment in different ways, and it therefore represents different symbols. Sometimes spiritual, sometimes economic, sometimes practical, the natural environment represents ideologies of points in time. Additionally, and more importantly, nature has often been a symbol of a nation. Whether it is one specific time, a series of ideas, or an entire history, the notion of nature is interconnected to the meaning of a location.

The word 'nature' comes from *natura*, Latin for birth – from which the words nation, native and innate are also derived. Not only do nature and nation share a common Latin root, they share a common history where one has constantly been used to define the other. Many countries have defined their national identity through their landscape (Macy and Bonnemaïson 2003: 1).

The point here is landscape stands for more than just a series of aesthetic preferences. It is rather a symbolic and representative item. Consider two examples: Scotland and the United States. Environment and landscape historian Karen Syse's extensive research on Scotland has demonstrated the role of landscape in understanding a place. Using Mòine Mhór as a case in point, Syse concludes "land management is the result of subjective cultural and aesthetic values in society" (2009: 192). As there are different cultures and different values, there will necessarily be differences in land management and aesthetic preferences. The idea of a beautiful landscape is therefore contentious. Regarding Scotland, Syse makes the distinction between those who see landscape as working land, to be used and lived on: "a furnished landscape, filled with people, houses, fields, and animals, and land shaped by people's labor"; and those who see landscape as separated scenery, to be viewed from afar: "a scenery in

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which people are excluded or only seen from a distance" (2009: 212). Such a distinction between landscape uses and aesthetic preferences can be seen internationally as well.

The United States adopted an idea of nature that accomplished precisely the two aforementioned ideas of Macy and Bonnemaïson (2003): one, it intentionally symbolized itself as a nation, and two, it distinguished itself from other nations (and continents, for that matter). America, from early in its inception, embraced the view of nature as wild – *wilderness*. "Wilderness is a qualitative term which involves wild, uncultivated, 'unspoiled' land inhabited by wild creatures, and where humans are merely visitors" (Porteous 1996: 76). Such a position was beneficial to the new nation because it was exclusive, powerful, and a crafted contrast to the culture that Europeans—particularly, the British—held in such high regard. The alternative is highlighted by Porteous:

Conscious of their cultural inferiority, American elites hymned the virtues of the simple, moral life and its landscape counterpart, the wilderness. It was not long before American boasting of the size and splendor of their landscapes' sublimity became a commonplace, Europe being reduced to the merely picturesque (1996: 78).

In the opinion of Roderick Nash, the American embrace of wilderness represented a longing to be proud and a fuel for an expanding national ego (1969: 66). Whatever it was, early United States national sentiment was directly related to an image of landscape – it is therefore one of the best examples of how the natural environment defines the national identity.

Landscape is therefore a term that has evolved over time, depending on the human changes in taste and perspective. It is related to cultural and aesthetic considerations, but also to national and symbolic ideas. Incorporating the notion of landscape into the National Tourist Routes means an understanding of present and historic interpretations of Norway. The next section will address how the Tourist Routes have been analyzed through the lens of landscape and history.

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### 2.1.2 National Tourist Routes in Relation to the History of Landscape

If landscape is related to the visual features of an area, specifically according to aesthetic appeal, then the National Tourist Routes in Norway are a part of this tradition. Furthermore, if landscape involves a symbolic representation and a useful resource, the Tourist Routes also relate. The natural components of Norwegian land have always been varied, but its aesthetic appeal has developed only with its accessibility. Since the term *landscape* comes from the Dutch idea that connects humans to nature, it is important to consider not only the potential, but the likelihood that landscapes are 'created' or 'curated', in addition to nationally symbolic. This is precisely the goal of *Views: Norway Seen from the Road 1733-2020*, a 2012 exhibition at the Norway National Museum of Architecture. The exhibition's curator, who also acts as the museum's project manager, Nina Frang Høyum says she wanted to demonstrate how the Norwegian perception of landscape is part of a 300-year history, and how the National Tourist Routes are a contemporary version of this tradition. She connects the present lookouts to the Norwegian National Romantic paintings, with their presentation of sublime views incorporating rocks, cliffs, and fjord areas (Høyum interview 30.08.12). But when asked to elaborate, Høyum explains the 300-year old landscape tradition as being far from passive or coincidental. Instead, the tradition involves artists, travelers and now architects presenting or "curating" the landscape as they wish. For an example, she relates a specific historical transition: from the presentation of the Danish King Christian VI's travels through Norway in 1733 to the present Tourist Routes. This early 18th century travel is recorded with paintings that have dangerous cliffs and ominous roads, and there is no reference to beauty or views. Conversely, the Tourist Routes present spectacular viewing areas as reasons to travel Norway and seek out the aesthetic (Høyum interview 30.08.12). From the exhibition, a critical

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transformation seems to have occurred in the mid-19th century. At that point, the presentation of Norwegian travels (in art and literature) shifted from being highly dangerous to being relaxing, adventurous, and impressive. The result of the change is a welcoming landscape for travelers to enjoy and admire. It is this shift, from *Norway-as-dangerous* to *Norway-as-beautiful*, that facilitated tourism, and now today, the Tourist Route program.

A not-so-subtle implication of the *Views* exhibition is the necessary historical developments that allow the National Tourist Routes to exist. In addition to the idea of staging landscape, there is also the interrelated concept of infrastructure and improvements in the ability to experience nature. The foreword to the associated museum publication tells of these notions:

[The National Tourist Routes] is interesting as part of a long tradition of staging the experience of the landscape and as a project that researches and experiments at the nexus of architecture, technology, infrastructure, art, and nature. The idea of organizing things practically, and thereby preventing dangerous situations that might arise in dramatic terrain, and of defining points along the road where the traveler can experience beautiful and picturesque, or sublime and terrifying, views, can be placed in a 300-year-old tradition in Norway (Høyum 2012: 7).

In back-to-back sentences, the book writes of the staged experience and the practical organization. Such an idea aligns with the exhibition and Høyum's insight, which both highlight the danger of bad roads, flooded areas, impassable waterways, and imposing fjord cliffs. Tourism developed when Norwegians alleviated the dangers, and thus when the land became organized with roadways, bridges, and rest areas (Høyum interview 30.08.12). *Views*, therefore, is concerned with the tradition and history of views, but it does not conceal the infrastructure that makes these landscape experiences possible.

The issue of infrastructure in nature and its relationship to landscape also interests Janike Kampevold Larsen, a landscape specialist who is a frequent

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contributor to the academic writings about the Tourist Routes. Larsen argues that humans have changed nature for thousands of years, and so we must understand landscape as an altered and directed concept (2012a: 9). One such influence can be found in the building of roads, which act to shape the human experience of a setting. What interests Larsen about the Tourist Route project is how it not only brings attention to the Norwegian landscape, but also represents the infrastructure throughout natural areas. From this argument, there is a reinforcing conclusion: "What we perceive as beautiful, what we perceive as landscape, has been formed by culture, ideology, and politics, as well as by architectural and industrial practices" (Larsen 2012a: 9-10). If landscape is understood as the dynamic representation of visual aesthetics, and the aesthetics are understood as potentially altered by time and culture, then one can recognize the role of humans and human creations. Larsen develops the idea that specific infrastructure like roads and railways were vital to develop Norwegian landscape – not only because they enable access to natural areas, but because they direct views in these places. "The Norwegian landscape came into being, as it were, as the modern road system developed. And it was defined, first and foremost, as a set of cultural landscape and dramatic views" (Larsen 2012a: 10).

Mari Hvattum, a professor of architectural history and theory, also argues for the dual role of the road, as a vital tool for accessibility as well as a force to direct. Additionally, this falls within the historical tradition. She speaks of the Norwegian mountain ranges in the 19th century, discovered primarily because new infrastructure carved into nature and directed visitor viewpoints (Hvattum 2012: 83). Interestingly, Hvattum proposes the Tourist Routes link to a landscape tradition that all changed with the character of train transportation – not only was railway scenery "a curated, staged landscape", but it was also comfortable and without danger (2012: 87). What was the comfort of train travel, then became the comfort of car travel, and is so today. The dangerous, intimidating mountains

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became appealing landscape because roads and railways offered comfortable access to nature. This view of landscape, also presented by the *Views* exhibition contains three elemental issues: (a) Roads exist in nature, and in doing so, (b) provide human access to nature. (c) The access, however, is simultaneously a control and restriction, *allowing* at the same time as *directing* the automobile and the view.

David Louter, historian and Cultural Resource Chief for the United States National Park Service, writes about the role of roads and argues for the same three basic issues in his book about Washington State's National Parks. Roads were effective in framing the National Park landscapes and controlling where the cars could travel, but their existence did something else: "They provided a way to experience nature through leisure" (Louter 2006: 20). The new experience changed the way people thought of nature and therefore altered their expectations. Nature's image had evolved, and so did the image of the automobile. An essential point made by Louter is how early roads in nature did not conflict with—but instead garnered the support of—the conservationists and preservationists (2006: 20). After initial displeasure (for instance, in Yosemite National Park in 1900), automobiles became a necessary way of linking people with the natural environment, merging machine with nature, and enabling the human experience of landscape (Louter 2006: 26). Although this acceptance faded in America after several decades, it provides a historical context for Norway's project. It is in this tradition of reconciliation from the early 20th century that the National Tourist Routes belong.

Consequently, the Tourist Routes are choreographing Norwegian nature. There is a panoramic tradition from the 18th century that founds the Norwegian sites – a tradition of staging landscape as a series of views (Larsen 2012b: 169). Larsen extends the comparison farther back when she relates the Tourist Routes to the landscape gardens in 18th century England, which had referential stopping points

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for directed viewing along the garden paths (2012b: 170). It is this tradition of moving and stopping and moving again that Mari Hvattum also considers – a landscape "designed to be experienced in motion" (2012: 88). But both Larsen and Hvattum make a point to show how a simple link between Norway's Tourist Routes and the panoramic tradition of viewing is inadequate. Larsen notes how many of the Norwegian sites are in fact more complex than just a viewing platform or a passive stop point (her examples are the reversed viewing experience of Videfossen at Gamle Strynefjellsvei, designed by Jensen and Skodvin, and the planned geological and religious reference at Børra on Andøya) (2012b: 171). Many sites present landscape as something to move through and address. Like Larsen, it is the non-traditional areas along the Tourist Routes that interest Hvattum. Many sites are simply facilitating views, but she believes several others encourage movement or at least do more than, in Hvattum's words, "simply fetishize a viewpoint where you can stand and look at this picture postcard" (Interview 27.08.12). Outside of tradition, certain built areas focus on alternatives, like historical references or direction to an entity other than the view. Although Larsen and Hvattum appear to disagree about the number of traditional *panoramic* sites in the Tourist Routes (*many are panoramic* to the latter, *many are not* to the former), they relate as they present traditional aspects of the routes as well as the character of non-traditional sites.

The Tourist Routes in Norway therefore relate to the history of landscape in a variety of forms. In one way, landscape is particularly suggestive about its incorporation of humans with the land, on multiple levels. The Tourist Routes exist amidst a tradition where infrastructure provides human accessibility to regions, and therefore shapes the cultural and political presentation of the land. In another way, just as landscape perceptions have changed over time, so too has the relationship between Norwegians and their land in the last 300 years. Different highlights are pronounced in the Tourist Routes and the exhibitions



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about them, which reference art, advertisements, video, and infrastructure that historically portrayed Norwegian landscape. In a third way, roadways through landscape have a history unto themselves, which represent 'nature as leisure' and accessibility. It therefore is a very plain historical comparison between the Tourist Route program and historic tourism in Norway. Finally, there is a landscape terminology that may or may not relate to the project in Norway – terms like picturesque, sublime, and panoramic. Publications often reference these traditions, and analyze the extent to which the comparisons are accurate. In this way, in addition to the other three, the National Tourist Route Program in Norway has a relationship to the history of landscape.

## 2.2 History of Architecture

Instead of providing a sweeping, extended version of architectural history, I will point to specific, relevant cases. These related cases come from a variety of different architects and theorists. Since buildings have been constructed for centuries, it makes more sense to underscore only the most pertinent examples which relate most strongly to the topic at hand. The history will therefore pay particular attention to the historical relationship between architecture and landscape, as well as an instance where design intimately related to nature.

### 2.2.1 Architecture and Landscape

The previous historical section explained how humans have different perspectives about landscape depending on when and where they exist. In other words, different people in different places at different points in time have different ideas about nature, beauty, function, and their personal relationship to the environment. It is in this context that architecture must be understood. Because architecture is a human action, it too is subject to the same altering

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attitudes concerning the natural environment. Moreover, architecture demands a connection to this very landscape. Many architects and theorists have stressed the symbiotic relationship between architecture and nature, like Henry David Thoreau (in Maynard 2010), Richard Haag (in Saunders 1998), Antoni Gaudí (in Crippa 2003) and I.M. Pei (in Jodidio 2006). Quite simply, a built object will exist in relation to the ground upon which it stands and the area within which it occupies, all within a human's perspective. Although there can be a landscape without architecture, there cannot be architecture without a landscape.

Architecture never exists in isolation. Every building has some connection to the buildings beside it, behind it, around the corner, or up the street, whether its architect intended it or not. And if there are no buildings near it, a building has a connection to its natural surroundings. ... The connection between architecture and surroundings is obvious and unshakeable (Goldberger 2009: 213).

With this relationship as the foundation, we can now examine how architects have had varying opinions regarding how architecture *should* relate to nature. Some sought to overwhelm the landscape, creating buildings distinct from their surroundings and contrasting with natural processes: think of the early skyscrapers with the fabricated metal foundations, the unnatural vertical nature, and the startling contrast to other buildings and land in the area. Louis Sullivan's Wainwright Building in St. Louis, Missouri (completed in 1891) is the paragon of such a position. Considered one of the earliest skyscrapers to be built, the Wainwright Building was the world's first steel-framed construction, with design decisions of a deep dark red brick to differentiate it from the area, and continuous vertical streams to portray its towering nature (Colquhoun 2002: 41). Like Sullivan, there are other architects who chose to design against the landscape. The most famous example is also a quite literal instance of working against the land: Le Corbusier's proposal to tear down Paris (specifically, central Paris, directly north of the Seine) and rebuild the area in his Plan Voisin (1925 in Hays

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1998). To a site he found unsatisfactory, the French architect sought to demolish and then redesign. Unlike Sullivan, Le Corbusier's plans were not realized.

As a contrast to early skyscrapers and demolition plans, there are also objects designed and built in relation to nature. People such as John Ruskin have argued how nature is the only proper model for building and architecture (Colquhoun 2002: 27). Frank Lloyd Wright is infamous for the attention with which he connected his buildings to the hills and streams of the surrounding locale (Huxtable 2004: 179). Ecological design schools stress the minimization of environmental impacts and the integration of people and places to nature's processes (Van Der Ryn & Cohen 1996: 18). As early as the 16th century, theorists like Andrea Palladio, with his influential *The Four Books of Architecture* (1997), have spoken and written about architecture's connection to nature, a discourse employed to this day. The connection takes many forms: architecture appealing to nature, referencing biology, enabling the environment, encouraging space, minimizing impact, closing off, opening up, using symbols, correcting meanings, and so on. The position uses arguments of the ethical, the environmental, the aesthetic, the natural, the evolutionary, the minimal, and the practical. Whether in association or disassociation, nature continues to demonstrate its wide-ranging influence upon architecture.

What needs to be mentioned, however, is the specific character of this *architecture and nature* relationship. Importantly, there are two agencies at play – the necessary and the chosen. Architecture cannot exist without the landscape. But at the same time, architecture is also a product of a designer's ideas, particularly regarding how a built object connects to its surrounding environment. In other words, there is a contradictory interplay when considering architecture and nature. As long as we recognize that landscape can be essential as well as manipulated—that built objects can be strictly embedded as well as products of design theory—then we can proceed with this historical section.

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### **2.2.2 Architecture and Nature Purposefully Connected: A Selective History of Bauhaus**

In addition to being historical, the relationship between nature and architecture is also a relationship between freedom and limit. While the natural setting is necessarily involved in designed places, it at the same time is not determinative. Architecture needs to account for landscape and build within scientific laws, but architects still have freedom to design and build uniquely and for their own purpose. The purpose can in fact represent a philosophy, and the design can contain intended meanings. Architectural history can be helpful to demonstrate this point, since there are times in which specific designs have been part of an academic or philosophical movement, and also part of a historical context. Due to the page limitations for a Masters Thesis, I will present the Bauhaus design movement in the following section as an applicable example. The historical circumstances in early 20th century Germany were the foundation from which the Bauhaus emerged. With it came a school and a set of theories that worked to come to terms with—as well as encourage a debate about—nature and design. There was an agreed-upon idea about the natural world that inspired Bauhaus design, and it therefore is an example of intentional design, implemented to a specific philosophy, occurring at a particular time.

The biological and medical advancements at the turn of the twentieth century produced a setting for examination. New theories of human existence and the world were emerging – ideas about the universe from Einstein, theories about truth from logical positivists, philosophies about the self from Freud, and writings about existence from Marcel. The period, in social and academic circles, was reflected on human beings and how much of a person depended on biological or pre-determined components. It is not surprising then that design and architecture incorporated some of the same subjects. Bauhaus, a simplified name for Staatliches Bauhaus, formed in Germany in 1919 and was the result of Walter

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Gropius' initiative and proposal *The Bauhaus Manifesto*. As a now-renowned movement in architecture and design, the school sought to reform education and integrate all the arts into a single location with a single philosophy and set of ideals (Droste 2002: 22). The Bauhaus school explicitly connected its design philosophy with biology, insofar as humans were impacted by biological characteristics and Bauhaus creations were organic and natural. If the resulting products were related to the processes in the natural world, then human beings would be healthier, more comfortable and better connected to their elementary being. The goal was harmony and unity. As the historian of science Peder Anker says, "Bauhaus design was to reconcile the artificial and the natural in a way that would both enhance human life potentials and create a harmonious environment" (2010: 16). One specific example is instructor László Moholy-Nagy, whose versatile research focused on uniting design and nature, and whose own art (as a photographer, painter, and sculptor) centers on a human being's relationship to biological needs. He sought to define architecture as "an organic component in living", thereby demonstrating his intended link between the built and the organic (Moholy-Nagy 1938: 180). The unity with nature was beneficial to humans insofar as it was necessary of a total being. Interestingly, although an intimate connection was ideal, the relationship implies a unity with respect for each other – related and inspired, but not combined. In other words, it was a connection with separation. It was in respecting the boundaries between humans and the environment that would care for both (Anker 2010: 127). Also interesting is how the Bauhaus reconciles the issue of synthetic and natural. Although the designs employ an organic philosophy, they come from a school that collaborated, at its very core, with industry and mass-production. Even the school's building, Dessau Bauhaus, was a concrete and glass "metaphor of collaboration with industry" (Hughes 1991: 195). This reconciliation, we will see, is something that the Tourist Routes employ. Like aforementioned American National Parks (Louter: 2006), the Norwegian tourist project merges organic and inorganic.

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The Bauhaus school employed teachers and taught students about design in relation to nature. The teaching was part of an ideal; the ideal was part of a philosophy; and the philosophy was therefore incorporated into the writings and works of nearly all the teachers and student alumni from the school. This example not only provides a frame through which we can understand the Norwegian National Tourist Routes, but also exemplifies the potential in design. Just as my earlier Theory section explained, objects can make statements, intended from the creators, and representing theories and meanings. From a group's philosophy, designs that symbolize and show the beneficial harmony between nature and humans emerge. Although this historical instance might appear random and inapplicable, it demonstrates how there has been an organized intention in design. The previous section had shown the dual influence of architecture, stuck between the limits of a landscape and the agency of a designer. The Bauhaus School is a specific example of this same middle ground. In one sense, there was the culture and the context in which the movement developed. Still, the designs from the professors and students were not fully dictated by the events and interests of that time period. Simultaneously, context influenced design while design produced within its own philosophy. The Bauhaus exemplifies the unique position of architecture as both *acting* and *acted upon*. Such a balance can have many results. One issue in particular is criticism. As long as architectural projects are both restrained by the context and free to influence, they are subject to a wide range of critical opinions. Some critics may object to the statements; others may demand applicable themes; some might want more expression; others could suggest a change of focus. The National Tourist Routes are in a position similar to the Bauhaus, and so they also reflect an ability to *act*, while also *acted upon*. Consequently, the Tourist Routes are susceptible to criticism for a variety of reasons. The following chapter will address this criticism, and it will question if architecture's duality—as seen in the Bauhaus and architecture's relationship to landscape—remains applicable.

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### 3. National Tourist Route Criticism

While many architects and architecture writers consider the National Tourist Route Project in Norway to be a success (e.g. *Metropolis* Magazine, Askim, Rui, Hvattum), there are still others who are critical of the program and wish it would alter its focus. The criticism is often directed to specific sites, for instance *The Million Dollar Toilet* at Hereiane ("Nasjonal Turistveg Jondal – Utne" 2008), but occasionally applied to the project as a whole. The topics vary, from the price to the content to the issues it ignores, and sometimes all three (Rø speech 2010). One especially harsh argument, published in *Arkitektur N*, regards the environmental impacts and implications of the Tourist Routes.

#### 3.1 Bertram D. Brochmann's Critique

The English summary of the Tourist Route critique, published by the magazine *Arkitektur N* (01/2009) and written by architect Bertram D. Brochmann, can be simplified as follows: The Tourist Route project should not give the Norwegian Public Roads Administration the power to define the view of Norwegian nature, since the organization is responsible for nature-destroying roads and polluting automobiles, and the locations have regressed to a picturesque tradition of viewing (Brochmann 2009: 63). The Norwegian text of the article provides a more complex criticism. First, Brochmann notes the role of the Norwegian Road Authority and the harm in allowing this organization to prioritize polluting automobiles. He says there are currently few restrictions to prevent "develop[ment of] highways and parking lots and garages... in our nature" (2009: 61). To this he adds how the size and scale of the project permits the Road Authority to construct in untouched, beautiful nature without discussion (62).

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Second, Brochmann criticizes the Tourist Route situation, which gives a road department the ability to define public attitudes toward Norwegian nature.

The way nature is perceived in the Tourist Route Project, we shall see it but we shall not touch it. Nature has become an antiquarian thing that should be viewed from the distance. We are not supposed to walk into it and we are not supposed to be a part of it<sup>3</sup> (Brochmann 2009: 62).

He argues how architecture is partly to blame, since the Tourist Routes prioritize strong, attention-grabbing buildings that distract from nature – emphasizing their objectness rather than presenting the landscape. Third, the Tourist Routes are contrasted with the *Naturum* project in Sweden, which Brochmann believes to be more successful. With information about each location and effects of climate change, combined with environmentally-friendly structures, *Naturum* is an excellent example of a progressive and pertinent governmental initiative, according to Brochmann (2009: 62).

In my opinion, the criticism in *Arkitektur N* is exemplary of two crucial issues: Firstly, there is a great degree to which the public is misinformed about the National Tourist Routes; Secondly, it is difficult and oftentimes insufficient to generalize about this tourist project. As they stand, Brochmann's arguments are effective. But they are convincing only as much as they are misinformed. Insofar as the criticism centers on the building of roads and parking lots through pristine nature, it inaccurately addresses the core of the Norwegian program. I, like Brochmann, was initially led to believe the Tourist Routes were roads constructed through Norwegian nature, in order to provide the stunning views and practical sites. In fact, the program uses already existing roads and declares them 'Routes'. Then, along these designated routes, it develops certain rest areas and sites. Therefore, it is incorrect to criticize the program and say it builds through "pristine", or worse yet, "untouched" nature. This is incorrect. The nature

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<sup>3</sup> Text translated by Norwegian colleague



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has been touched by an existing roadway prior to the government's initiative. The process was one of *selecting and designating*, not *cutting and constructing*. The introduction for the Architecture Museum's *Views* exhibition book clearly portrays this fact:

The roads [in the 18 National Tourist Routes in Norway] have been established using already existing roads that stretch from Havøysund in Finnmark in the north to Jæren and Ryfylke in the south, to Rondane in the east and Hardangerfjorden in the west. Along the roads, advanced architectural installations have been or will be constructed – panorama platforms, stopping places, toilet facilities, trails, and visiting centers (Larsen 2012a: 9).

More specifically, it is Larsen who notes how the Tourist Routes are mostly comprised of roads built from 1880 to 1940 (2011: 180).

However, it is not only the roads that are mistakenly accused of being new and therefore destructive. The sites are also criticized for being built in natural, "untouched" locations of wilderness. Architect Knut Hjeltne, of *Knut Hjeltne AS Sivilarkitektur*, wanted to address precisely these points in the beginning of his interview. The first issue on his mind, without being asked, was explained this way:

What I think is relatively unknown, in the public view of the program, is that most of these places are not really new. They are a renewal of existing places with environmental destruction, difficult traffic situations, and so on. I think 95 percent of the [Tourist Route] sites are this way (Hjeltne interview 17.08.12).

When I asked for more specifics, Hjeltne noted how nearly all of the sites in the Tourist Routes changed existing places that had certain problems. The problems, such as destruction of nature or poorly planned areas, have been "undercommunicated", and the role of design to solve the problems is largely unknown (Hjeltne interview 17.08.12).

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A different example might do even better to contrast with Brochmann's first criticism, and that is in the work of architect Niels Marius Askim, from the architecture firm *Askim/Lantto Arkitekter AS*. If the criticism takes issue with building in untouched nature without discussion, then the case of The Glass Hut in the area of Vikten (in northern Norway) has not been properly understood. Askim described the summertime situation in Vikten: 3 or 4 buses would arrive each day to bring tourists near this small business where a local family makes glass bowls and bottles. Askim saw a situation where architecture could improve the area, giving the buses a place to park and the tourists a pathway to a beach, which is located directly south of The Glass Hut. "Here you really needed an architectural object because it was steep down [to the water]. You needed to use architecture or design in a way to make the situation better" (Askim interview 28.08.12). The result would have improved the buses' convenience, the shop's profits, and the tourists' access to the water. However, two elderly brothers who owned the site could not agree on what should be done, and so the project was never realized. In this instance, nature was not isolated as a view of mountains or forests, but instead composed a shoreline that ran parallel to a road. The road was not built for the Tourist Routes, and the proposed site was not completed. The reason it was not completed, a discussion with local landowners, contradicts a point from Brochmann. Interestingly, the case of Vikten also opposes his second critical position, which states how the Tourist Route sites keep humans away from nature. If realized, the architectural object just south of The Glass Hut would have been a pathway to the water. Visitors would not view the water from a distance, but instead architecture would have provided access. This proposed pathway would not have been an attention-grabbing building. It would have been an access tool.

In Brochmann's argument, there are significant inconsistencies and notable inaccuracy. A prominent reason for the discrepancy can be explained by

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recognizing how the specific sites are unique, and not mere parts of a universal philosophy. As long as any criticism is a general claim, it will fail to address the distinctive and particular differences among the nearly 200 built sites in the Tourist Route program. So, while the notion of building roads in untouched nature is entirely inaccurate, the other issues appear to be true in certain, but not all, cases. We can understand the National Tourist Routes better on an individual level, and not through generalizations. Specific sites are constructed in beautiful nature, but many others are small rest facilities along the roadway. Some areas are built in order to provide a view, but many others facilitate experience within nature or relaxation without a panorama. Certain locations restrict the movement of the tourists, but still others encourage it. Some spots contain grandiose and memorable architecture, but others have no built object at all. The result of this complication is an inability to entirely criticize or entirely compliment the National Tourist Route program, since it is not easily a sum of its parts. There is incredible variation along the different routes and among the different sites. Therefore, I encourage a more complete examination of the program.

### 3.2 National Tourist Route Criticism: On a Grand Scale

Although critical of the inaccuracies, the previous section does not altogether argue against Brochmann's article, nor other similarly-framed criticisms. There is an interesting notion embedded within the argument – that is, the development of an automobile-dependent tourist program in a time of climatic change. It is this issue that Alf Erlend Støle, a landscape architect working for the Norwegian Road Authority, mentioned: "There is the question of whether the Tourist Project is a good project, because is it sustainable? Because you make people go by car, and is that what we want when we talk about climate change?" (Støle interview 21.08.12). Although new roads are not being built, a successful Tourist Route

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program would result in an increase in automobile travel, over the small, antiquated roads through the rural Norwegian nature. The increase would not only occur on the routes themselves, but additionally with the car and air travel from international locations, in order to arrive in Norway. One issue, rightly alluded to by Brochmann, is the specific case of pollution – understanding that an increase in automobile tourism and international arrivals also increases the consumption of motor oil and the emission of carbon dioxide (Solomon et al. 2009, Caldeira and Wickett 2005, De Oliveira et al. 2005).<sup>4</sup>

It is this environmental issue that was notably absent when speaking with the architects working on the Tourist Routes. In each interview, I raised the point of sustainability, regarding their work, their sites, and the project as a whole. In no instance did the response involve automobile travel and its pollution. Niels Marius Askim spoke of the sustainability of his built objects, noting the materials used and the ability to change 90% of the area back to nature if needed (Interview 28.08.12). Knut Hjeltne talked about how sustainability depends on the site, using examples of chaotic areas (like Gudbrandsjuvet) and what can be done to prevent damage to the land (Interview 17.08.12). Architect Tanja Lie of the firm *Lie Øyen Arkitekter* explained how sustainability is considering the future and so using the land without destroying it (Interview 27.08.12). And finally, architect Beate Hølmebakk, from the two person office *Manthey Kula AS*, spoke of sustainability with regards to not only nature, but also recognition of one's possibility and responsibility (Interview 03.09.12). I am aware that I did not question directly about the sustainability of the Tourist Routes as an automobile-based program. However, I also know that each architect understands the character of the routes. The disadvantage of open-ended interviews is precisely this: I cannot say with certainty what the architects feel about pollution in the

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<sup>4</sup> This point is not resolved when Brochmann gives support to the *Naturum* program in Sweden, an initiative that also provides services to motor travelers, in this case in the form of visitor centers.

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Tourist Routes, nor can I generally apply their sentiment to everyone involved in the design and development of the program. I can instead point out the interesting character of their responses, and what it appears to show.

One apparent item is architects are not oblivious to environmental issues. Even if they did not speak of pollution, they related to nature and sustainability in ways that directly influence and affect their work. A telling example is in the materials they had selected for their structures. Instead of associating 'sustainability' with the Tourist Route program as a whole, the architects reflect on the specific sites they designed and the choice of local stones (in the case of Lie's Valdreflye site) or reclaimed wood (according to Askim). Another example is how all the architects spoke of the landscape and the nature at their sites. There seems to be a direct and intimate connection to the natural area in which architects work. Hjeltnes, for instance, spoke of the relationship between the edge of a road in Valdresflye and the edge of the connected grassed ground, where "the road is almost like a carpet – a tarmac carpet on the ground" (Interview 17.08.12). Hølmebakk explained the attempt to minimize her object's waste and damage in the area, going so far as to restrict the burning of foreign materials since excessive burning tends to sore and crack the ground (Interview 03.09.12).

Further still, in addition to the direct connection to the environment, the architects' responses demonstrate their position. By this, I mean architects are most interested in the areas they work, but also, in the areas they control. Let us not forget the role of the architect in the Tourist Route project. Either hired directly or victorious in design a competition, the architecture firms are commissioned by the Norwegian government to design and oversee the creation of sites along the routes. They would not be part of the process if they intensely considered or outright rejected the entire existence of the Tourist Route program. They are instead hired for a specific purpose – with a job and a job description, as Hvattum says (Interview 27.08.12). Their purpose, then, does not require an

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immense amount of reflection about the indirect environmental implications of a tourist program. Here, Hølmebakk's reflections are insightful: "When it comes to how you deal with nature... I do think that one should be aware of what possibility one has and what responsibility one has" (Hølmebakk interview 03.09.12). The possibility does not relate to car pollution. Rather, the architects control the design of the site, the materials used, and how well the structure fits in the landscape. In reality, there is no possibility for the designer to impact car travel. Even a superbly good or horrendously bad design would not alter how far tourists drive. The second part of Hølmebakk's statement is also useful – the responsibility of the architect. In addition to the practicality of working with the direct and immediate issues, the architect has the responsibility to worry only about what he or she can control. Considering all of these factors can shed light on the statements about sustainability from my interviews. And because of the architects' responses, I shall also direct the conversation away from the scientific and environmental, and towards the symbolic.

### 3.3 Technology in Nature

Following the discourse from Tourist Route architects, it seems necessary to move away from a quantitative approach. Since, apart from the scientific and atmospheric problems like pollution, the National Tourist Routes in Norway also invoke the historical issue and symbolic matter of technology in nature. It therefore is my goal in the following section to present a context for *technology in nature* and describe how the Tourist Routes relate to this historical issue.

The question of technology in the natural world recalls a debate beginning most prominently with the Industrial Revolution, but arising even earlier when the Renaissance in the 15th to 17th century altered human perspectives (Bell 1999). It originally was a most practical issue, where humans were able to use and

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convert natural resources into power, heat, and energy with technology. Then, consumption and industry shifted into a more idealistic and symbolic issue, which pondered the environmental and health effects of consuming actions (McKibben 2007: 15). Sociologist Daniel Bell speaks of action combined with perspective: "If we ask what uniquely marks off the contemporary world from the past, it is the power to transform nature. We define our time by technology" (Bell 1999: 4). He notes Galileo (who simplified the notion of nature) and Descartes (who reordered the universe with mathematics) as pre-industrial examples that align with the notion that "Nature is a machine" (1999: 12). The synthesis of nature and technology is a product of Bell's definition of nature, which presupposes the interventions and workings of humans (1999: 8)<sup>5</sup>. This degree of combination, however unique to him, begins our analysis of historically considering technology in nature.

A generally more accepted interpretation of technology in nature is one that supposes a distinct separation between the two concepts. It would be through this distinction that one could say cars are *technology*, and the Norwegian mountains, coasts, and forests are *nature*. Additionally, the contrast could involve *man-made* and *natural*, where the architectural sites are created by humans, and often done so in the natural environment. This division exists in a historical discourse as well. As a reaction to the industrialism in Great Britain, William Morris and John Ruskin worked and wrote during the 19th century Arts and Crafts movement, which characteristically appealed to slower, more natural processes (Todd 2005, Triggs 2009). The issue of natural and constructed also arises in the aforementioned Bauhaus movement. An example is the Bauhaus founder and professor Walter Gropius who demonstrated his fear of the inorganic with statements against capitalistic industrialism in his designs and lectures (Anker

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<sup>5</sup> It also is this idea that makes Brochmann's notion of 'untouched nature' nonsensical.

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2010: 37). Gropius wanted to unify nature and humans by eliminating the technological interruption. He wrote: "Overwhelmed by the miraculous potentialities of the machine, our human greed has interfered with the biological cycle of human companionship which keeps the life of a community healthy" (Gropius 1945: 20). The "potentials of the machine" could today be interpreted to mean the automobile, and the Tourist Routes could be harmful in their encouragement of this overwhelmed state.

What ought to be recognized is how Gropius, as well as his friends like Serge Chermayeff, thought of environmentalism in a unique way. Environmental action was that which countered the capitalist expansion and invasion into the natural world. Chermayeff wrote *Community and Privacy: Toward a New Architecture of Humanism* (1963), which cites the destruction of the natural environment during the human movement and their development of wilderness and farmland. The reaction was against capitalistic ideals and its destruction. Chermayeff, therefore, argued for the development of separate human spaces. His solution was not an interactive balance between the human world and the natural world, but instead a separation that would prevent the human exploitation and destruction: a demand for humans to produce "fully functioning self-contained environments, capable of sustaining human life over long periods", with inspiration coming from "both the nuclear submarine and the space capsule" (Chermayeff 1963: 46-47).

Chermayeff's philosophy may be considered extreme, but it is worth evaluating further. The apparent hypocrisy in the position is not hard to find – essentially, the architect and professor argues how the most environmentally-conscious human is the one who avoids the environment. The assumption is how capitalism creates unavoidable human destruction in nature. It seems that this argument is inconsistent, not only with logic, but also with a conventional environmentalist who seeks experience in nature. The attitude of Brochmann assumes the position



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exactly opposite from Chermayeff, criticizing a situation where humans view nature from afar and are not walking through it (Brochmann 2009: 62). So which is it? Is it more environmentally-friendly to be a part of nature or to be separated from it?

Anker supplies an additional twist to the issue. Similar to his writings about Bauhaus, Anker relates ecological design to a biological notion where human beings ought to live in harmony with the natural environment (2005: 527). The ambiguity can be described as this: ecological ideas clearly have no explicit connection to space exploration, and yet, "living in harmony with the Earth's ecosystem became for the majority of ecological designers a question of adopting space technologies, analytical tools, and ways of living" (Anker 2005: 528). The designs presumed that capitalist industrial society will necessarily be destructive. What began as a way to prevent destruction became a method to provide rehabilitation: "Their task [as ecological architects] was to design bio-shelters or eco-arks modeled on space cabins in which one could survive if (or rather when) the Earth turned into a dead planet like Mars" (Anker 2005: 528).

I mention Anker, and the notion of technology in nature, because it raises the complex point about what is 'environmentally-conscious' or 'natural'? One answer could be something as simple as a connection between humans and the natural environment, or the ability to walk in nature as Brochmann suggests. However, another answer could be something as startling as constructing bio-shelters based on space technologies in order to protect nature, or prepare for Earth's annihilation. My point again is not to simplify matters. Brochmann cannot be correct in simply assuming that 'environmentally-friendly' means an access to walk in nature. If so, we would be presupposing an inconsistent and particularly insufficient claim. For instance, we can easily imagine a much more natural situation than driving to a location and then walking around – in particular, a situation without driving. However, this drive-to-walk method enables many

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hikes around the world. In addition, an environmentally-destructive activity could provide the best chance to be a part of nature, such as clear cutting a jungle to supply a convenient walkway through nature or damming a river to create a calm floatable stream. The goal here is not to argue for a space-age philosophy in a definition of 'environmentally-friendly'. The intention, instead, is a request for a more sophisticated analysis of the concept. Not every construction in nature is bad, or every restrictive area terrible, or every separating device unnatural. Complexity, therefore, could be a theme of this section. What seemed initially to be a simple history of technology in nature exposed the complex reality of various interpretations and intentions. Recognizing intricacies and avoiding oversimplification will allow us to analyze architecture more thoroughly. The next chapter will use a historical context and an evaluating perspective to supply an analysis of National Tourist Route architecture.

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## 4. The Complexity of Architecture

Even though the previous section took a critical stance towards certain ecological doomsday philosophies, it is important to consider the basic premise: There is a way in which separating humans from nature can actually benefit the environment. Harmony can be accomplished, not with unrestricted access, but with sensible design. And it is through this view that architecture becomes an appropriate topic. There are ways to view the Norwegian National Tourist Routes as a complex balance of multiple factors and pressures. Like the discourse on technology in nature, the role of architecture and design is difficult to simplify. The history section in this thesis has referred to such complexity, with architecture balancing the necessary yet non-determinable landscape with the human design. Additionally, architecture ranges from simple solutions to problems, to perpetuating ideas about areas, to delicately balancing philosophy and practicality, to encouraging a greater understanding and experience. The variety of its inherent complexity is on full display throughout the Tourist Routes, particularly as it relates to nature and intended design.

### 4.1 Architecture: Practical Solutions to Problems

A simple presentation of facts, similar to the arguments from Bertram Brochmann, can force conclusions that are hypocritical or confusing. The historical issue of technology in nature provided an additional example of complications that result from oversimplification. There is, however, a way to avoid such contrasting conclusions, and it was something suggested at the end of the last chapter. In order to understand the possibility of something seemingly illogical, the situation requires a pragmatic approach to individual situations, rather than some grand philosophy. Pragmatism allows the type of sophisticated

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analysis that is necessary for the Tourist Routes, and it also supplies a perspective through which the sites can be better understood. Therefore, it is not only a method, but also a theme. In addition to the Tourist Route's character as an aesthetic architectural project and panoramic program, it is essential that we also view them as containing practical solutions to problems.

Speaking of practical solutions to problems is another way of aligning with Janike Kampevold Larsen, who characterizes Norwegian ideas as pragmatic. She argues that Norwegians have a relationship to nature that is not abusive or dominant. Norwegians instead value subsistence and survival. According to Larsen, it is in Norwegian character to live modestly in order to simultaneously protect one's self and the environment (Larsen 2011: 180). The position is one of a middle way that allows for a case-by-case analysis. Pragmatism does well to explain apparent inconsistencies between sites, since different architects design different structures to solve different issues at different locations. Let us begin with Knut Hjeltne, who was so outspoken regarding the misinterpretations of the Tourist Routes. The first sites Hjeltne designed were located in the Valdresflye plateau. According to the architect, he was approached by the Tourist Route committee to do a study. The requested analysis hoped to find solutions to the problem of roadside parking. Because the road was the same height as the ground, automobiles frequently drove into the grass and parked in undesignated locations. In doing so, the cars damaged the area. After providing some initial thoughts to the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, Hjeltne was hired to design a parking area in Rjupa. The situation and his plan were described this way:

Rjupa was this expanse of gravel. So then there was one thing: to prevent cars from going out in nature. And also, to try to make a clear barrier so pedestrians or people out of their cars would be on a built work (Hjeltne interview 17.08.12).

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With a clear problem came a clear solution. From the issue of sporadic and environment-destroying parking, Hjeltnes designed a parking area that would clarify the landscape and protect the nature (Figure 3).

The area's design, however, is both simply and not so simply that. In one sense, Hjeltnes addressed a problem with a designed solution. In another sense, he made very particular decisions relating to the site and his scheme. The design was intended to invert a sensation, "walking in the landscape for a day and you go back to a flat surface", and so the intention plays on a feeling: emerging from the car rather than from the landscape or the sea (Hjeltnes interview 17.08.12).



*Figure 3: Rjupa Site - Designed by Knut Hjeltnes*  
(<http://www.nasjonaleturistveger.no/en/valdresflye/rjupa#img2>)

From the car, the tourist encounters a most precise and inclined platform (Figure 3). Hjeltnes designed the inclination to be to the degree that can be felt, so that it produces a sensation and encourages a direction.

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That was one of our ideas: to make this into a very specific, precise platform, so that if you went out there you would automatically fall towards the view. And that's not visual, but something that affects your body (Hjeltnes interview 17.08.12).

The example at Rjupa helps to explain several things. First, the reason for the site was not a frivolous desire for an extravagant architectural structure, but instead, it is a practical solution to a problem. Still, and second, the solution was thematic, influential, and aesthetically pleasing, in addition to being functional. Third, the built structure reconciles the issue of technology and nature in a way parallel to Chermayeff (1963) – protection through separation. The combination of these three factors makes for a simple and yet complex design that incorporates the practical as well as the beautiful as well as the influential. Importantly, Hjeltnes admitted how the site dictated the design. When asked about his priorities, Hjeltnes responded that it depends on the place. "We try to sort of step back and think 'what is this place about'. In these works with the National Tourist Route project, the places are quite different from one specific point to another" (Hjeltnes interview 17.08.12). Even when concluding that his architecture is more "quiet" than others, he again admitted this might have more to do with the locations in which he worked than his philosophy.

Considering another Hjeltnes site, Vargbakkane, we can again see a practical solution. But this time the solution is different because it responds to a unique site. The destructive roadside parking problem was also present at Vargbakkane. Even more, there was a safety issue in addition to the environmental destruction and ugliness. Since the area was so steep and the parking undefined, oncoming traffic was difficult to see from a parked vehicle. Hjeltnes therefore leveled out a half-circular parking area that not only directs a landscape view and provides rest facilities, but also increases traffic visibility.

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Tanja Lie worked in Valdresflye as well, and she also designed in response to cars in the landscape. Her description, however, differed from that of Hjeltnes, since she designed a subtle barrier as a different solution with unique inspiration (Figure 4). With her own interpretation of the problems and the sites, Lie decided to produce the environmental equivalent to a Police barricade: "We did a kind of nail mat, like when you are trying to stop cars as Police. We thought 'what would be nature's answer to a nail mat?' So we dug ditches around the parking areas and filled them with stones so that you can't really drive" (Lie interview 27.08.12).



*Figure 4: Construction of 'Nail Mat' Rest Area in Valdresflye –  
Designed by Lie Øyen  
(<http://www.lieoyen.no/projects.asp?id=20062143332&flashOrder=11>)*

In the same Tourist Route area, Hjeltnes and Lie uniquely interpreted a personal design response to the same problem. Both were pragmatic solutions, but were different depending on the specific location and the architect's working philosophy. Hjeltnes incorporated the idea of a precise constructed platform to produce feeling in the user, while Lie wanted to produce something structurally different and symbolic, yet undistracting.

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When architecture is understood—at least in some ways—to incorporate a practical solution to a problem, it necessarily becomes more complex. The complexity influences its character, but also the way in which we can speak of it. A built structure is not simply the result of a human's free and arbitrary design, but it also can relate to a problem's solution. The problem can have various sources and might be different in different places. Askim illuminates the issue when he speaks of the variety in the Tourist Routes: "I think each project lives its own life and each site is different and nature's impact on each site is different and the surrounding is different in many ways" (Askim interview 28.08.12). The problem that impacts the design could involve human and automobile damage to the environment, such as at Valdresflye. Aforementioned examples help to demonstrate how much of the design depends on its location and issues unique to the site. The parking areas in general, as well as the specific design decisions such as the incline of the structure and the rock-filled dividing spot, exist as signals and barriers against automobile movement. However, the problem is not only automobiles. It can also be environmental damage to inorganic items that demand a designed solution in Tourist Route locations. This was exactly the issue in Akkarvikodden.

Manthey Kula AS was hired for the Lofoten Island location of Akkarvikodden with the instruction to rebuild a toilet. The previous restroom facility had been blown away by an Arctic storm, at this location between the 66th and 67th latitude parallels of the Arctic Circle. Therefore, the problem in this case was harsh environmental conditions. And Manthey Kula's commission was the solution. Concrete was chosen to heavily anchor the base of the toilet, to prevent it from again blowing away. Two concrete walls also stand vertically, connected to the base. The purpose of the standing walls is not structural or load-bearing, but rather to add more weight to stand the winds. Around the concrete wraps a corten steel frame, giving the toilet its distinctive color and shape. Through all



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the design, it was the solid and heavy form that took precedence, relating specifically to the solution of the site's problem.



*Figure 5: Akkarvikodden Site - Designed by Manthey Kula  
(<http://www.nasjonalturistveger.no/en/lofoten/akkarvikodden#img7>)*

When I asked Beate Hølmebakk if there was any significance to the materials used or the identifiable M-shape (Figure 5), thinking she would speak of symbols or narratives, she surprisingly spoke of the practical aspects in the design.

The shape came before the materials. It had to be a very heavy building, because there is so much wind there. It had to stand very heavily on the ground. So it started out as a concrete building, but more or less the same shape (Hølmebakk interview 03.09.12).

The toilet of Manthey Kula appears as a strong architectural object. The parking areas of Hjeltnes stand as precise platforms. The location from Lie exists as a subtle alteration. Still, all of these designs in their different forms are evidence of how the Tourist Route sites are practical solutions to problems. The problems vary, as does the landscape in which they exist. Nevertheless, it is essential that architecture is understood as pragmatic, especially along the Tourist Routes.

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## 4.2 Architecture: A Balance

Even if architecture along the Tourist Routes is a practical solution to problems, we would be wrong to believe it is only practical. The example of Hjeltne and Lie's designs in the previous section were intended to show how even the subtly designed areas, founded on the most direct response to problems, contain something more. This *more* can be oversimplified to mean *aesthetics*. Or it can be reduced completely to mean *more than practical*. This is Paul Goldberger's position in the introduction to *Why Architecture Matters*, saying architecture happens when the designer is aware of acting in any way beyond the practical (2009: ix). It may appear rudimentary, but it is worth clarifying how architecture is not without—but is often more than—the pragmatic.

The wide-ranging writer and critic Umberto Eco theorizes about the human relation to architectural objects: "We commonly do experience architecture as communication, even while recognizing its functionality" (1980: 12). Eco approaches architecture as something that can communicate function (like a home as a dwelling) and an ideology of a function. He speaks of the symbolic dimensions of simple objects. His example is a chair, which is always a place to sit, but also refers to royalty when it takes the form of a throne (1980: 24). Eco's argument, therefore, is how built objects can be communicative and functional, as well as symbolic.

According to the way it has been defined, architecture is an object's design and construction. Architecture seems to be, at its basic, the practical and the functional. However, according to Eco, even the practical form of a structure implies its communicative capacity. The argument that architecture is functional presupposes an understanding of a form's ability to communicate function. With this in mind, it therefore is much easier to consider architecture as communicating or symbolizing more than the practical, of which the Tourist

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Routes incorporate. Different architects speak of this combination in different ways. During an interview, Beate Hølmebakk says "The interesting part of architecture [is] there is always this practical or functional aspect which needs to be solved – and you try your best to solve it in a way which both works and has some qualities" (Hølmebakk interview 03.09.12). Knut Hjeltne speaks of the *qualities* that are beyond the functional, items such as narratives or direction or poeticism. When he explains his rest areas, he notes the calm practicality of the place, simultaneously combined with the poetic (Hjeltne interview 17.08.12). In another part of the interview, Hjeltne notes the combination, not of practicality and poetic, but problem-solving and aesthetics, saying it is "two-fold in a way" (Interview 17.08.12). The two-fold balance for Tanja Lie is between solving and meaning: "It is important for all good architecture I think, that it has meaning – but that it is also solving something. That it helps humans to do something. Architecture is a tool" (Lie interview 27.08.12). This idea of architecture as a balanced act with additional qualities, poeticism, and meaning is notable insofar as it is not necessary.

My point is this: The National Tourist Route project is unique because it encourages architecture that is beyond the practical. It is best to not define architecture as something that requires a certain level of quality, meaning or beauty. This is because these additional characteristics are design decisions much more than they are obligations. Two examples prove this: Hølmebakk's description of qualities and Askim's philosophy. A simple analysis of the insightful claim by Hølmebakk (in the paragraph above) exposes how the functional is always present in architecture, while the additional qualities are desired. She delineates the necessary from what is additional when she notes how many restrooms work and work well, but lack "qualities". Her conclusion states architecture is fundamentally the functional, and qualities are what she therefore attempts to develop.

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There is this very interesting relationship between something incredibly measureable and specific and functional on one side, and this immeasurable realm that has to do with qualities that you interpret and try to cultivate (Hølmebakk interview 03.09.12).

The architect is therefore trying to cultivate something in addition to the practical. But this is not always the case nor always desired.

Case in point, from the Tourist Route architect Niels Marius Askim, is also another example why architecture is functional at its foundation. Instead of speaking about the 'additional qualities' or 'duality' as the other interviewed architects do, Askim is outspoken about a specific functional role of architecture. He does not want to portray an architectural statement unless it is necessary. Architecture, then, is the result of a problem and the reaction to a site, and nothing more. It is for this reason Askim is critical of the Tourist Route designs.

[I am critical of] a lot of [the sites] because in a way I think you can—with design—do very simple things that answer the functional demands for a program: for resting, for viewing and everything. And in many ways and in many places, that's enough. In many places, you don't need design because it could change the place in a way that affects the situation and the experience (Askim interview 28.08.12).

This perspective is helpful because it not only differs from the other architects, but also aligns directly to the earlier definition of architecture. We could conclude that Askim is more traditional or minimal, in a way. What this means is his approach to a project considers the most minimal and responsive solution, only building structures that are necessary and that function well in a location. However, determining Askim to be *traditional* minimizes what in fact he is prioritizing. If architecture is *the practice of designing and constructing buildings* (as this thesis has defined it), then Askim is no more 'traditionally' an architect than anyone else I interviewed. The importance of his statement comes from his insistent appeal to the nature at a particular site. An architect need not prioritize the landscape as much as he does. Askim himself gives examples of

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this when he references contemporary architecture, and how "buildings have become more iconic and star architects have designed in Oslo or in Dubai or in Beijing and it doesn't matter actually what's around it" (Askim interview 28.08.12). Even if it appears that this architect is minimizing built structures, one could conversely argue that he is instead maximizing the natural environment. Consequently, Askim again is no more or less an architect, but he provides an inverse example of the role of design intention.

And yet, another way to reconcile the philosophy of Askim is to consider the aforementioned writings of Eco (1980), or those from the architectural theorist Charles Jencks. Jencks differs from Eco by defining architecture as "the use of formal signifiers (materials and enclosures) to articulate signifieds (ways of life, values, functions) making use of certain means (structural, economic, technical and mechanical)" (1980: 72). There is something to be learned from the stated description, even in its unexplained form. Jencks presents, at the very foundation, an idea of architecture that has materials (*signifiers*) in certain combinations (structural, for instance) so as to express values or functions (*signifieds*). This means even the most mundane practical structure Askim (or any other architect) could design contains in it a signifying system. According to Jencks' definition, 'architecture expressing ways of life' requires no more meaning than 'architecture expressing function'. Eco's position is similar, when he argues how recognizing functionality requires architecture to be communicative. The conclusion therefore is also the supposition: "Architecture intends to communicate a message" (Jencks 1980: 76). This reconciliation does not diminish Askim's prioritizing of the environment. It does however bring forth a notion of architecture as communicative, even in its most basic and functional form.

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### 4.3 Architecture: Intended Design

When speaking with the Tourist Route architects, a frequent topic was their precise reasoning for design decisions. The priorities seemed to vary slightly, but anything from the shape of a structure to the selection of materials could be—and often times were—justified. In many cases, the explanation was as much practical as it was poetic. The design would be made in order to solve a problem, but done so in a way that tells a story or stands beautifully. Architects revealed not only how much intention went into the design, but also what they were trying to do. Theory has shown how architecture can say something, architects are saying something, and architecture then can do something. The previous section's ideas from Jencks (1980) and Eco (1980) support the claim that architecture, even in its practicality, is communicating. It is this notion, combining a communicative aspect with the designer's intentions, that each interviewed Tourist Route architect supported, albeit in different ways.

Knut Hjeltne was most descriptive about how his designs were intended to affect the people experiencing them. According to him, architecture is as much about influencing sight as it is about body sensation and feeling. Explanations for sites often related to impressions. It is no surprise, then, that when asked about his philosophy Hjeltne referenced the sensual side of architecture. "In general, in this office, we are quite interested in thinking of architecture as something which is tactile, which has smell and all these bodily movements" (Hjeltne interview 17.08.12). From the incline on platforms to the shape of stairs, Hjeltne argued how his designs were intended to influence feeling and behavior. It is the subtle, wavering inclination at his Valdresflye rest areas (especially Rjupa) that produce a dizzying sensation, magnified from the car drive. It is in these same areas that Hjeltne tilts the precise platform enough towards the view that the user seems to fall to it (Figure 3). The design is specifically intended to influence the user. Hjeltne's philosophy appears to be not only that architecture is about

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feeling, but that his design can influence that feeling. In both ways, he intentionally designed his sites in order to produce an area and a structure that works with the landscape, and also impacts the observer.

Another example of intentional design comes from the previously noted Akkavikodden toilet by Manthey Kula (Figure 5). In addition to the functional aspect of enduring the Arctic winds of northern Norway, Beate Hølmebakk's toilet contains some specific components that aim to influence the tourists. Although the designer admitted how a restroom is far from a life-changing object, she still argued how there can be designed influence: "It can enrich the total experience if you have a very distinct, different spatial experience" (Hølmebakk interview 03.09.12).

The toilet was designed to be a very physical structure that provides a distinct space. The area in Lofoten is wide, broad and overwhelming, with spiking mountain peaks, patched green grass, high winds, and fast clouds. The landscape is strong and "incredibly present". There is hardly an escape from the natural elements, which consistently impress upon the observer's senses.

The toilet, then, is a break from this area. Its strong form and geometric design relates to the hard lines of the peaked mountains surrounding the area. However, its interior space (Figure 6) is a sanctuary of sorts.

Although our building relates to the natural conditions, we wanted the space itself to be a break from them. So we made these toilet rooms such that when you go into them and go into the space, you lose contact with the nature. You don't see the mountains and you don't see the trees and greenery. You only see the sky. There is a big skylight and there's a large window placed so high that you can only see the sky. So it becomes sort of a break from the natural surroundings (Hølmebakk interview 03.09.12).



*Figure 6: Akkarvikodden Interior - Photo by Paul Warchol  
(<http://www.architonic.com/aisht/roadside-reststop-akkarvikodden-manthey-kula/5101209>)*

Externally, the toilet mirrors the slashing slicing mountain edges and sharp winds. Internally, the corten steel noticeably wraps around and closes off the landscape. As much as the building's shape relates to the surrounding area from the outside, it just as strongly inverts the idea from the inside: blocking nature and exaggerating the hardened metal fabricated structure (Figure 6). The notable character of the space is it being a built object, so that the tourist moves from the natural to the constructed, and then ceremoniously returns to nature afterwards.

Just like the intention of Manthey Kula, architects Tommie Wilhelmsen and Todd Saunders designed the famous Stegastein platform as a way to make a new space. This wooden platform, cantilevering 33 meters out over the small town of Aurland, left its impression on me (as described in the Introduction) and many others, as it is one of the most recognizable structures along the Tourist Routes



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(Figure 7).Wilhelmsen spoke of the design as a way to dramatize the nature, providing much more than the often "quiet" Tourist Route sites. It was this drama that caused an unpublicized conflict. The Tourist Route committee thought the viewing platform was too much, and requested more development and planning before building. As the story goes, the design progressed without alteration only after the sensational positive response to a short article in the magazine *Wallpaper*\*. The platform, therefore, was completed as intended – a way "to go out into the air" (Wilhelmsen speech 30.03.09). The new space is one shooting off the roadside, 60 meters above the steeply sloping cliff, 600 meters atop the town of Aurland on the edge of the Aurlandsfjord.



*Figure 7: Stegastein Platform - Designed by Todd Saunders and  
Tommie Wilhelmsen*  
<http://www.nasjonalturistveger.no/en/aurlandsfjellet/stegastein#img3>

It was the intent of the architects to help tourists rediscover nature through this platform. "On the west coast [of Norway], you get blind. You see this landscape all the time and it's so beautiful, and after 20 minutes, you don't see it anymore. It's like you get used to it. So we tried to make some way to discover it again"

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(Wilhelmsen speech 30.03.09). The new space enables a relationship with nature that is out, above, and uninterrupted.

The space at Stegastein is therefore simultaneously contrasting and comparing to the constructed space at Akkarvikodden (Figure 5-6). In contrast, the viewing platform connects humans to nature in an unrestricted way, out on a ramp with little protection, no visual barrier and the ability to look any direction, including down – through the clear glass endwall or over the ledge. The Akkarvikodden toilet protects humans from nature, closed off and providing a break from the landscape, shielding the distant view entirely. But while the form of the spaces contrasts, the intention is nevertheless the same. In effect, the sites use architecture differently to accomplish the same goal – that is, change the human feeling towards nature. Manthey Kula sees nature as overwhelming and present, which tires the 'experiencer'. Wilhelmsen and Saunders see nature as vast and beautiful, which numbs the 'experiencer'. The designed sites are then intended to amplify the natural environment. The toilet indirectly acts to this end, providing an area to rest in an inorganic cocoon, so that when the user emerges, he or she is refreshed and then confronted completely (again) with the landscape. Stegastein's platform directly accomplishes the feat, immediately providing a way to entirely face the landscape.

Still, even in its apparent directness, the platform does not fully connect the tourist to the nature. In this way, it is again oddly related to Manthey Kula's design. The platform is a constructed structure providing at the same time access to and separation from nature. On the ramp's end, it is possible to see straight down the cliff side, past the trees, to the city below, and then to the fjord and its waterways, undulating next to the insulating mountain edges, all the way to the horizon. The view is spectacular. An ability to look down and up, left and right – a memorable experience, and an experience of nature. However, it is precisely this fact—an experience *of* nature rather than *in* nature—that proves the

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platform's separating character and concerns certain critics. In addition to the position of Bertram Brochmann (2009), there is also Janike Kampevold Larsen's more tempered point of view. When writing about Stegastein, she argues how the platform is a dual metaphor: a) Nature is to be seen, and therefore formed by the human perspective; and, b) Humans have a unique relationship with nature (Larsen 2008: 47). Larsen's analysis is insightful and worth examining:

[The platform] launches us into an impossible space – as if this would grant us better access to nature, as if out there we could really grasp its totality. The broad walking board invites us to follow our desire for nature right into it! What happens out there, however, is that the physical feeling of being there is all one can think about. ... One's attention is turned towards the very structure, we lean out over it, look back upon it – much in the same way vertigo administers our attention to our own bodies (Larsen 2008: 47).

Written in relation to her personal experience on the structure, the insight from Larsen is valuable. However, what initially appears to be a criticism of the structure is quite aligned in fact to the design intentions of Saunders and Wilhelmsen. If the Tourist Route sites were only attempting to connect humans to nature and exist as unnoticeable tools for understanding, then Larsen's observations should be read as a poignant critique. Instead, recognizing the expertise of Larsen and the intent of Saunders and Wilhelmsen allows us to accept the Stegastein platform and its influence as an example of architecture effectively performing (or, to use a previous term, doing something). The wood structure is not simply a tool to put humans in nature. It rather plays ambiguously on the notion of experiencing nature and being unrestricted. In the first sense, and as Larsen notes, the experience is as much personal, individual and internal as it is an experience in nature. Consider the platform as related to how Jean-Paul Sartre, the French philosopher, spoke of anguish. For, not only does it compare to the vertigo Larsen describes, but it incorporates the distinction between the external and the internal – the *from without* and the *from within*.

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Vertigo is anguish to the extent that I am afraid not of falling over the precipice, but of throwing myself over. A situation provokes fear if there is a possibility of my life being changed from without; my being provokes anguish to the extent that I distrust myself and my own reactions in that situation (Sartre 1956: 29).

The vertigo experienced when peering from Stegastein is related less to falling than to jumping, and is less about the structure than about myself. But note how the structure can produce an ambiguous space, on several levels. For instance, with respect to the technical definition of 'natural' or 'nature', the experience of walking out and above the trees and fjord is not something *existing in or caused by nature*<sup>6</sup>. It is an experience caused by a synthetic, preassembled platform. As the Tourist Routes create a new space at Stegastein, they also create what Larsen correctly and literally calls 'an impossible space' (2008) – a location that, among other things, could not be realized naturally or without a built structure.

It is clear now that Saunders and Wilhelmsen do not fail in their design, but rather succeed. The intention was to create a new space that enables a rediscovery of nature. Discovery, in this sense, is much more related to human consciousness than external impressions. It is concerned with the human perspective. Humans become numb to strong nature not because the environment changes, but because their own view of the environment changes. Stegastein was designed to shift this view back, provide a new space and a new perspective, and most significantly, allow humans to reflect on themselves at the same time they face the overwhelming Norwegian landscape. It is for this reason that Wilhelmsen's words are so striking when he says, "It's like an art installation in the landscape" (Wilhelmsen speech 30.03.09). The implication is how the architecture is an aesthetic object, a slight ramp and bend in the enormous landscape. But the quote reveals more than that. Like art, Stegastein requires the

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<sup>6</sup> The definition of 'natural', according to the The American Heritage Dictionary (2001).

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human to reflect on his or her self, the surroundings, and the meaning of the work. The platform influences the reflective and analytic perspective of the viewer (who also becomes an 'experiencer'). It relates to the writings of art critic Michael Baxandall, who argues how descriptions of paintings do not refer to the physical character of the art, but rather to the effect it has on us (1985: 11). Stegastein was not designed to only be seen or solely as a tool with which to see. It was designed to influence the tourist and demand a form of analysis. It exists within the landscape and the environment, and plays on that notion. It initiates a feeling that comes from reflection. A way to understand this feeling is to return to Jean-Paul Sartre. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre takes particular care to distinguish fear from anguish: "fear is unreflective apprehension of the transcendent and anguish is reflective apprehension of the self" (Sartre 1956: 30). The difference hinges on the reflection, which is the same concept spoken by Larsen. Therefore, with Baxandall and Larsen and Sartre, Stegastein can be understood in the context of an influential design and space. It is art in a way, just as it is architecture and a reflective space. In its entirety, the Stegastein platform is a wedge between several arenas, including art and architecture, restricted and unrestricted, natural and unnatural. And from what has been said, we can reasonably conclude that there was an intention to design as a way to produce this interesting dynamic.

## 4.4 Architecture: Controlling

The examples of Hjeltne's Valdresflye rest areas (Figure 3), Manthey Kula's Akkarvikodden toilet (Figure 5), and Saunders and Wilhelmsen's Stegastein platform (Figure 7) help to demonstrate how architecture is intentionally designed to produce a certain effect. As much as the architecture is communicative and influential, it appears that an effective design would in fact

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control the viewer – a parking area would restrict destructive driving, an inclination would produce a falling sensation, a peaked roof would allude to mountains, a platform would force reflection. The previous section, without clarification, likely suggests a simple cause and effect relationship between design and experience. However, it is not as simple as it seems. Design does not control and an architect's strongest intentions are not necessarily impactful. It is helpful to refer back to this thesis's theoretical discussion, especially the points regarding the conditional nature of design. Architecture does not necessarily say and do something, but rather, it has the capacity to say and do something. Similarly, the design does not ensure a controlled and directed response, but it has the capability to influence the experience<sup>7</sup>.

One historical example of control in architecture comes from the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Bentham devised a hypothetical prison design he calls the Panopticon (Figure 13), which has one central tower for the watch guard, and a full circumference of prison cells (1798). In this form, the single guard in the tower could watch each of the inmates (to observe, *-opticon*, all, *pan-*), while the inmates would not recognize exactly when the guard turned his or her eyes. Essentially, the philosophical experiment is determining an efficient prison structure that would control inmate behavior, not with force, but with the perpetual potential of being watched. As the inmate would lack the ability to clearly see the watchman, Bentham concludes that he would consistently feel the 'gaze' (Semple 1993: 144). Here, the relevant point is how designed environments can produce a type of control. The Panopticon is not only an example of a *statement* (Foucault 1972), but also, as Paul Hirst argues, a space that perpetrates a discourse about power. "The 'gaze' of the inspector in the tower

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<sup>7</sup> When speaking about capability, it should be noted that this is not an issue of *X* or *not-X*, but instead a gradient scale of influence. In other words, the options of influence are not full control or no control. A design has the ability to exert certain degrees of control.

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is a form of power-knowledge; it is productive both of controls over subjects and the re-modeling of their conduct" (Hirst 2005: 170). Hirst raises a necessary issue: in addition to a power discourse, the hypothetical effect of the Panopticon can be found in both the mental and the physical behavior of the inmates. The watchtower demands their conscious awareness, which also alters conduct.

Such an idea, that combines power discourse with a built statement, certainly connects to—and likely inspired—Foucault. This idea of control in architecture was first written by Foucault in a 1967 essay about space named "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" (1984a). In it, he explains how intentional spaces, such as the design of the Panopticon, could produce levels of control and formations of power. As an argument, it is strong and certain about the control of the structure, essentially assuring the mental and physical submission of the inmates. Extreme language such as this seems to reach too far. Panopticon philosophy and Foucault's essay on the subject assumes the unwanted simplistic cause and effect relationship between design and influence. Perhaps a middle way would do better to explain the reality of designed environments. Bentham and Foucault are helpful to demonstrate the potential for architecture to control humans, but they imagine too strong and too simple a connection. I therefore, and again, propose a restrained understanding of design's influence – possible, yet incomplete.

Interestingly, Foucault appears to alleviate the problem. In an interview in 1976, Foucault qualifies the extent to which a design has agency, and therefore clarifies his earlier statements about control in designed spaces. The interview, titled "Space, Knowledge, and Power" (1984b), contains more or less the type of complex yet reserved position that is most effective to address design. It also is a notably different tone than his previous statements. Foucault says architecture alone does not have the full ability to oppress or free humans. "I think that it can never be inherent in the structure of things to guarantee the exercise of freedom.

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The guarantee of freedom is freedom" (Foucault 1984b: 245). The qualification is effective on his part, separating the subject of architectural form from human agency. From the distinction, a conclusion seems to be design alone cannot control a human: but, it can produce effects by aligning to people as they exercise their own freedom. Architectural theorist Neil Leach reaches a similar result when he analyzes Foucault's views:

It is not the form of the panopticon which controls behavior, but the power differential between warden and inmates. The efficient layout of the architecture is merely supporting the exercise of this power. Foucault thereby provides a crucial insight into the capacity for architecture to influence human behavior (Leach 1997: 349).

What we have left is a philosophical foundation to an architectural matter. From here, it is useful to cite Norwegian architects and their position. But first, recall the Panopticon and the distinction Hirst (2005) made in his analysis – the influence of the structure was both mental and physical. Although I have argued how Bentham (1798) and the essay "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" (1984a) take too hard a position on control, it would seem unwise to entirely disregard the view. Foucault's clarification seems to provide a way to reconcile the positions. Therefore, the dual influence of design on the mental and the physical can be helpful in understanding the design of objects and spaces. How precisely does this relate to Norway's National Tourist Routes? And did the Norwegian architects recognize this balanced approach? In the following section, I will explain the position of Tourist Route designers and argue how their decisions correlate with the limited mental and physical influence that Foucault speaks of in "Space, Knowledge, and Power" (1984b).



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## 4.5 Architecture: The Influence of Design in Relation to Freedom

The architects for the National Tourist Routes commonly cite their design's effect on behavior and perspective. Architects argue how design can impact a user's behavior and actions in one sense, or their thinking and understanding in another. However, recall the previous section and its argument that a design's influence is subject to a human's necessary freedom. It would therefore appear that a design is influential but not controlling. No one clarifies this as well as Wilhelmsen, when he speaks about the elevated Stegastein platform. The platform's design plays on the issue of borders and limits. Wilhelmsen notes that his experience at Stegastein shows how some individuals remain uncomfortable. My experience supports the same idea. With a strong wind slightly shaking the platform, a group of three male tourists spent as little time as possible on the structure. They parked, walked to the end, peeked over the glass, and then quickly walked back to their automobile, lightly laughing. Although I could not hear what they said, the actions of these men demonstrated their discomfort on the platform. To the designers, the Tourist Route committee asked one simple question: 'Is it safe?' Wilhelmsen's answer might come as a surprise: "Of course it's not safe – it depends on how you act, really. But this is not safe. It's 600 meters to the fjord. If [a tourist] jumps here, it's 60 meters until he meets the ground...most people won't survive" (Wilhelmsen speech 30.03.09). Examining this assertion reveals several important components. For one, the designer is not suggesting his platform is structurally unsafe, or in other words, that the platform alone creates danger. The engineering and design has passed all examinations and has not shown any sign of engineering fault. Thus, Wilhelmsen speaks for the aspect of human freedom. The platform produces a dangerous distance to fall, but only if a human acts to create the fall. Safety or danger is directly associated with human action and behavior, and it is precisely this relationship that Saunders and

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Wilhelmsen understand and address. In a way, the issue of *influence but not control* is seen at the Stegastein stage. No high walls block the view or the ability to jump – a reality exaggerated by the downward-tilted clear glass at the walkway's end (Figure 7). From the apparent freedom, there is an experience of vertigo: not of falling but of hurling oneself off the edge, as Sartre (1956) has previously been quoted to say. The design is therefore intended to influence the behavior through a mental concept, albeit unnecessarily. A tourist could jump off the platform, and this reality is understood by the designers and the Tourist Route committee. However, it is evident from the Wilhelmsen's experience, as well as my own, that the intention is satisfied. "I think it was a very interesting discussion as an architect. If you make people very safe, they will go over the border. If you make them a bit unsafe, they will respect the height in a way" (Wilhelmsen speech 03.30.09). The respect is a perspective as well as a behavior. Influence comes from Stegastein's designed interplay between freedom and control, safe and unsafe.

During our interview, Mari Hvattum also analyzed this designed interplay. In her view, many of the installations along the Tourist Routes are meant to "contain you, rather than to facilitate your access", often times through the construction of raised platforms (Hvattum interview 27.08.12). However, such a position seems insufficient because it fails to account for two items: *access* by another definition and the intentions of the design. A simplified *containment v. access-granting* division is misleading because it requires a specific definition of access. In particular, this simplification requires us to define access as the physical tactile experience in nature. This is a satisfactory definition in itself. However, it can be misleading and insufficient if applied in general. One issue is how a human's physical experience in nature can, somewhat ironically, destroy the environment – as noted with the areas along the Valdresflye Tourist Route. Another issue is, as the example of the Stegastein platform shows, humans can gain *access* in a

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different form, or according to a different definition. Access can also involve reaching an otherwise inaccessible location and view, as well as a personal sensation or relationship to the area. By this I mean a tourist can potentially gain access to the feeling of vertigo or the rediscovery of nature, in locations that in themselves provide unique experiences. In addition these two issues, several notable Tourist Route sites demonstrate access by the first definition. Physical access is generated by certain architectural objects, such as Askim/Lantto's walkways in Lofoten, CODE's ramp in Senja (Figure 14), and Haga Grov and Helge Schelderup's steps up to Svandalsfossen and down to the fjord near Sauda (Figure 10). There also are examples of built platforms allowing visitors to be above an otherwise impossible area of Norwegian water, like in Jensen & Skodvin's waterfall platform at Gudbrandsjuvet (Figure 15), and Nordplan's pedestrian bridge over the Gaular River at the Likholefossen waterfall. I am however more interested in the true idea of *containment* or restriction, rather than an 'access/no access' debate. Even an elevated platform isolated in mid-air above a town and a fjord does not technically contain the visitor – neither on the structure nor around it. There is only a low stone wall bordering the Stegastein ramp, a barrier of sorts, but nothing able to restrict access to the grass and then trees below. It is this notion that Hvattum later qualifies during her interview.

Most of these places, of course, are not as tyrannical as you might think, because you can simply step off and wander off into the woods. It's not like they actually confine you, but the aesthetic gesture is very much about confinement. You are encouraged to step onto this platform, away from the potential mess of nature (Hvattum interview 27.08.12).

The confinement she speaks of, therefore, is an influence of the design. It is not a physical reality embedded in the structural form of the architectural object, but instead the type of strong yet uncontrolling effect discussed by Foucault (1984b), Leach (1997) and Wilhelmsen (Speech 03.30.09). Hvattum's conclusion, as

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opposed to her initial claim, is testimony to the effective architectural design throughout the Tourist Routes.

In addition to Hvattum, Knut Hjeltne is one of the strongest proponents of architecture's influence. And yet, even he speaks of the design as suggesting and not controlling. Built into the site plan is the intention of the designer, and many of Hjeltne's examples involve practical protection. One instance is the Norwegian Stave Churches, wooden churches built in the Middle Ages. One of the oldest, Urnes Stave Church, stands in Luster near the Sognefjord and was constructed between 1125 and 1140 (Fazio, Moffett, and Wodehouse 2008: 185). According to Hjeltne, the churches are fragile, made all the more problematic since they now experience much wear from the many tourists. Design was therefore summoned to help ease the issue. By erecting information centers close to the churches, Norwegian authorities hope more people focus on the education and fewer people enter the old buildings. The built centers are intended to redirect the tourist traffic into the welcoming constructed area, and suggest a visit that is informational instead of experiential. In Hjeltne's own words:

The government is building information centers in the vicinity of the Stave Churches to protect them from so much wear. ... It is not prohibited to go to the church, but the design pulls people to the built, story-telling objects instead of the real thing (Hjeltne interview 17.08.12).

In addition to the Stave Churches, Hjeltne uses the rest area in Rjupa to exemplify how design influences human behavior. The built area, in its precision, attempts to make an obvious reference to where visitors should go. Rather than walkways into nature, the site contains benches and facilities. Hjeltne argues that the design of the area intends to show where humans are "meant to be", but qualified his statement by saying "of course, you can walk off the platform, into nature, if you wish" (Interview 17.08.12). The influence is intentional and aimed at altering behavior, yet it does not entirely restrict.

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I think that in specific places, with a lot of pressure, the National Tourist Routes [sites] are concerned with protecting nature by separating humans from it. Controlling—well, not really saying it's not allowed to go in—but make people very aware of when they are crossing the border from something which is made with purpose—built in a way, by a human—and entering into something else (Hjeltnes interview 17.08.12).

There is something to be learned from this quotation. Not only does Hjeltnes' claim support the dual influence of design, but it also demonstrates a tendency to describe architecture as controlling the behavior of humans. Similar to when Foucault (1984a, 1984b) clarifies his position about architecture's influence, Hjeltnes corrects his description of influence. Instead of a complete restriction, which is required if one is to accurately speak of 'control', the form of platforms and structures merely suggest a way of acting. Consequently, the suggestion is as much mental as it is physical – a relation understood by Hjeltnes, as well as the previous example of Wilhelmsen and Saunders. The influence can be described as an awareness, which in effect alters behavior. Awareness, as Hjeltnes presents it, reintroduces the issue of humans and nature, and questions which type of relationship is most environmentally-friendly.

## 4.6 National Tourist Routes and Capitalism

Now we return to the discussion of humans in nature. Although I have argued the Tourist Routes are part of the historical question of technology in nature, the evidence from specific sites appears to support a version of environmentalism that distinguishes people and nature. My experience is not enough to generalize about the project, and such generalizations—like Bertram Brochmann's (2009)—can be short-sighted and insufficient. Still, there is significant evidence to support how Tourist Route site design sometimes relates to a philosophy like Gropius (1945) and Chermayeff (1963), who argue a separation of human and

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nature is best for the environment. Not only can we use these historical ideas to reconcile the reality of the sites, but also to ask further questions. If there indeed is a practical as well as symbolic justification for the separation of people from nature, what is the reason? Is it a part of an anti-industry discourse? Do the Tourist Routes portray a fear of modern machines or the wrath of capitalism? In certain ways, asking the same historical questions in contemporary time fails to account for the context, both of the past and the present. For instance, capitalistic destruction surrounded the work of Gropius and Chermayeff insofar as it was a problem and a debate in the mid-20th century. The identical issues and positions are not necessarily present in modern Norway. Nevertheless, the question can still shed light on an interesting theme, since for all its insufficiencies and contextual irrelevance, the matter of capitalism does still apply.

In the listed objectives of the Tourist Route program, it is said that the government-sponsored tourist project intends, among other things, to financially help local places in rural western Norway (Larsen 2011, Andresen 2010). The concept of capitalism is therefore not entirely inapplicable, since financial success is a declared goal of the program. There is however one explanation as to why capitalism is not actually a factor, regardless of the publicized intended goals: the Tourist Routes are not in fact structured like a money-making program. Driving the routes, there are few places in my experience where local residents could make money. The routes are not lined with vendors or small business owners, but instead with fjords and fruit trees. My funds went to ferry rides, grocery stores and one gas station, hardly representative of the rural economy. Besides availability of spending arenas, a definitive reason for the non-capitalist nature of the routes is their length. 158 kilometers on Hardanger and 183 kilometers along the Ryfylke routes are not long enough to warrant stop after stop in the small towns, or even purchase a hotel room. Also, stopping at the Tourist Route rest areas decreases the chance of resting in towns, just as the

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picnic areas encourage packed lunches rather than eating at local restaurants. My most evident chance to support local economy was buying small boxes of cherries (40 NOK) along the County Road No. 550, between Utne and Jondal. If the goal is in fact a stimulation of rural Norwegian economy, there would seem to be better solutions than spending 3.4 billion NOK on free rest areas and sites. Alf Erlend Støle notes another factor. He rightly explains how a capitalist program would have found a number of sponsors, to either fund through advertising or with contracts for necessary services along the routes, such as accommodation and quick food (Støle interview 21.08.12). The issue of capitalism is therefore oddly applicable. From the publicized goals of the Tourist Routes, it appears capitalist profit-based themes are embraced. If this were the case, we would be unable to explain the separation of humans and nature. The proposed combination of state-project, rural places, and profitability would contrast reasons from Gropius (1945) and Chermayeff (1963) for keeping people away from nature. And yet, the cost and nature of the Tourist Route program demands a different explanation. Some media outlets invert the proposed economic intention, concluding how Norway is exemplifying a true artistic triumph, where quality far exceeds financial considerations (e.g. Dwell.com, *Parsons The New School for Design* advertisement for "DETOUR: Architecture and Design Along 18 National Tourist Routes in Norway"). Others, like the archaeologist and cultural heritage adviser Liv Marit Rui, see it as a necessary result of a wealthy country showing the world its attractive nature and design (Rui interview 21.08.12). Even if the financial component does not provide conclusions about the Tourist Routes, it raises an interesting point in the way it relates to the historic and the complex context. An explanation connecting to Gropius would be wrong, but a simple reference to capitalism is equally inadequate. Could the issue, then, have much deeper roots? It is this question I will attempt to address in the following section.

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## 4.7 National Tourist Routes and Culture

If not just practical or simply an anti-industrialist issue, the character of the Tourist Routes could be explained by something much more general – namely, culture. The architect Tanja Lie believes a notable separation between constructed and natural is the overall statement in the National Tourist Route architecture. When I asked for her thoughts regarding the architect's designs as related to nature, Lie answered "Many of the projects are trying to make a clear distinction between man-made and nature" (Lie interview 27.08.12). Although she admitted this is not published or often spoken, it was her opinion that from the precise and geometric platforms and rest stops, the nature overwhelmed in a contrast. The architectural statement, as a result of this distinction, is one of dramatization. I was interested in her explanation for this—was it for safety? To protect the environment? For effect? Lie answered with regard to culture. She had lived and worked in Belgium and learned much about Holland, and she said these countries have made their nature. The infrastructure of cities like Amsterdam is a perfect example, where the water is controlled by a system of dikes and the main airport (Amsterdam Airport Schipol) sits under sea level. The statements in international architecture are therefore different than in Norway:

Their nature [in Belgium] is man-made, so they don't see architecture as something in opposition to nature. But in Norway, it has always been very tough to live here and I think everything you do [as a designer] is just a small, tiny piece of something man-made in this enormous landscape. (Lie interview 27.08.12).

The distinction between built architecture and nature is therefore not only present in the Tourist Routes, but may be uniquely Norwegian. Architects can use a constructed object to produce a desired effect, against the backdrop of a natural landscape. Lie exposes how the contrast is then not a floating anti-capitalism statement or just an occasional desire, but characteristic of the country and



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explained by the culture. More than aesthetic and practical, the tendency to contrast man-made and nature is thus cultural.

Considering a cultural explanation brings us closer to generalizing about the Tourist Routes, a misstep that has been criticized earlier in this thesis. It is important, then, to clarify the role of this cultural notation. From Lie, there is not an attempt to say all sites must be viewed and hence understood with an appeal to Norwegian customs. Instead, the observation is framed to say "many sites contrast man-made and nature", and "this can be explained through a perspective that contrasts architecture with nature" (Lie interview 27.08.12). The former statement is understood through the latter. Thus, Lie is not generalizing as much as it may appear. She is qualifying how a contrast, followed by an explanation, is possible. The situation is similar to a write-up from Parsons The New School for Design. For the traveling exhibition *DETOUR: Architecture and Design Along 18 National Tourist Routes in Norway*, the first sentence from Parsons reads as follows: "What can rest stops, information centers, and observation decks tell visitors about a culture?" ("DETOUR": 2011) In this vein, the Tourist Route sites can expose items about Norwegian culture, maintaining the uniqueness of the individual sites without broadly generalizing.

The issue of contrasting built and natural must be considered first with regard to a pragmatic perspective. As this chapter has argued, architecture along the Tourist Routes can often be explained as practical solutions to problems. So outside any specific philosophical or cultural context, some sites use design to solve environmental issues exemplified by parking areas at Rjupa and Vargbakkane, and to fix safety issues like at Carl Viggo Hølmebakk's planned visitor area above the waterfall Vøringsfossen (Figure 16). Another example for support is a pedestrian bridge at the Gjendesheim Turishytte in Jotunheimen, designed by Hjeltne. To cross the Sjøa River today, you must blow a whistle, wait for a boat to pick you up, and then ride to the other side. The inefficient and

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sometimes dangerous boat crossing will be solved with a pedestrian bridge. Thus, even if the contrast between nature and the man-made reflects a Norwegian cultural reality, it still involves the same practical aspects that often exist in architecture.

It is here, however, that one item must be clarified: precisely what is separated from nature. Throughout this thesis, I have used historical and contemporary examples to demonstrate the degree to which nature is connected to or separated from certain subjects. One issue involves technology in nature, specifically (and applicably) automobiles as technological creations. However, only considering technology ignores an even broader historical issue of the man-made, which encompasses not only machines but also objects and devices. It therefore was my goal in the previous chapter to connect *technology and nature* with the *man-made and nature* discourse. I did this primarily to incorporate a Renaissance and Industrial era dialogue about technology into the more applicable debate about man-made objects. Or in an exemplary relation, automobiles and industry are both *technology* and *man-made*; architecture, in normative discourse, is only *man-made*. What then happened was an additional factor blurred the conversation, namely, considering *human* to be a part of *man-made*. The more modern examples from Gropius (1945) and Chermayeff (1963) argue for a separation of not only man-made, but also humans from nature. Humans broadened the subject, while at the same time narrowing the cause – if people were the agents responsible for technology and destruction, a solution could be simplified by separating humans from nature. Also, when Anker (2005) speaks of the environmental movement in the second half of the 20th century, he is referring to space-like capsules as a way to protect, by separating the natural and the human world. Historical examples such as these were intended to introduce a variation on the assumed 'environmentalist position'. It is in this context that we can understand the interesting position of Tanja Lie.

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Saying that the Tourist Routes often distinguish man-made from nature (Lie interview 27.08.12) is not the same as saying the architects are designing space-inspired capsules. The notion of human separation from nature that Anker analyzed can only be seen at specific sites that require such a separation for environmental protection or safety. However, even these architectural sites are unique because they are not as much compartmentalized as they are suggesting a distinction or providing a platform. There are similarities between the two versions, such as a survival through division, but to combine all notions of separation is quite problematic. In particular, the contrast between man-made and nature that Lie speaks of can often be the same places where humans have additional access to environment. Distinguishing the built objects is not the same as restraining humans.

For instance, there exist clearly constructed objects at every Tourist Route site I visited. In every pull off and rest area, I saw two types of picnic tables and a cylindrical standing waste bin. One picnic table has edged rectangular seats and a single elevated table top of smooth poured concrete (Figure 5). The other features severely angled seats and a hanging flattop, all made of concrete. At the ferry waiting station in Ropeid, there is the same distinguishing concrete furniture and waste bins, atop a smooth floor of the same material (Figure 8). *Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor*, who designed the site, make additional and notable contrasts between natural objects and built objects. In addition to the site itself—a glass, steel, and concrete structure on the water's edge—the interior clearly splits the natural/unnatural. One wall is open-faced rock, the opposite is ceiling-high glass. The fjord water leads directly up to the building, whose concrete floor leads directly to small pebbles and then the rock face, noticeably portraying the position of the built space between water and stone.



*Figure 8: Ropeid Ferry Waiting Station - Designed by Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor*

Another example comes from the picnic area at Lovra, designed by *Helen & Hard AS* (Figure 9). Perched on a cliff that steeply descends to the fjord below, the picnic table and bench stand atop existing rocks. Where the rock ends, the table and seat posts begin. The constructed and the natural are distinct, yet combine to produce a single object. Natural rock becomes the foundation of the metal object, just as the Ropeid rock forms a wall at the ferry station (Figure 8).

These objects make use of Lie's distinction, while contrasting with the idea of complete human/nature separation. In other words, the concrete furniture directly contrasts the surrounding nature, and therefore exemplifies a distinction between man-made and natural. Still, they are only symbolically distinguishing, not restraining or restricting humans in any way.



*Figure 9: Lovra Picnic Area - Designed by Helen & Hard AS*

In fact, if used correctly, the manufactured benches encourage a resting place among the forest (e.g. Lovra), atop a field of fruit trees (e.g. Hereiane), and along the water's edge (e.g. Ropeid), meaning they assist a human experience in nature.

The topic of distinction lends even more support to the essential nature of a designer's intent. In addition to combining the various aspects of architecture, from the practical to the poetic and aesthetic, and incorporating history and historical environmental discourse, the overall matter to understand is how intention acts as the switchboard. With so many meanings and contexts, it is the designer's goal that helps unravel the complexity. Many issues influence a particular location, but the specific intent can define a site. This becomes apparent when we generally understand the Tourist Route sites to portray a distinction between the man-made and nature. The distinction is not simply separating humans from the environment, but it can separate when necessary. It is not only restraining automobiles from areas, but it is possible to restrain when

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needed. It is not solely protecting people from a fatal fall, but it does protect if the location demands it. Architecture therefore responds to the practical problems in a location with built objects that present a statement. The statement can influence the actions of visitors at the same time as representing something more.

This section has provided an explanation for the Tourist Route architecture with regard to Norwegian culture. Tanja Lie contrasted the Norwegian notion of nature (removed from humans) with nature in other European countries (made by humans), in order to conclude how the architectural culture in Norway distinguishes man-made from natural. This conclusion, however, appears to contradict earlier notions of humans in nature, or more generally, technology in nature. It was therefore necessary to investigate precisely what Lie meant by her distinction and how this could enable a better understanding of the Tourist Routes. Once the constructed/natural distinction was no longer a confusing contradiction, it was clear that rest stops along the Tourist Routes did indeed demonstrate Lie's theory. I then reached the conclusion that these issues of humans in nature, design with distinction, and the influence of culture exemplify the role of intention. Culture can help explain the reasons for certain design decisions, just as practicality and views and space are influential. Still, there is a specific architectural intention that aims to clarify and direct a site. The intention exists within a cultural tradition, as Lie argues, and seems in Norway to be a part of distinguishing built objects from natural items. However, there are additional cultural influences on design intention. One of these cultural items involves the issue of accessibility, and the next section will address how this relates to the National Tourist Routes in Norway.

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## 4.8 National Tourist Routes and Accessibility

To Lie, the additional statement in Tourist Route site design is cultural, where the man-made structures expose the reality that Norwegian nature and architecture are distinct. To others, like Henning Kaland of *CODE: architecture*, the cultural component of the added statement involves accessibility. For all three of his projects, Kaland speaks of making an area accessible. In one sense, at the Tungeneset area of Senja, the access is down to the coast and shoreline (Figure 14). In another sense, at Bergsbotn in Senja and the planned lookout in Gaularfjell, the access is to a viewpoint. Kaland's notion of accessibility, however, is not limited to the landscape. There is also a second layer that involves a different type of accessibility – namely, a personal type. All three locations are built to provide handicap access, so that a wheelchair can easily navigate the sites. "If you're in a wheelchair, you can still go to the edge [of the lookout at Gaularfjell] or you can go down here [to the water at Senja]. So these projects are also a lot about creating accessibility" (Kaland speech 30.03.09). Access is dually *to somewhere* and *for someone*. The dual notion also applies to the previously mentioned platform at Stegastein, which can provide its own variations on accessibility. In that instance, architecture provides a physical and unnatural platform straight out into midair, and at the same time connects to a mental and personal realm. The place and the person, the physical and the mental – it appears the Tourist Route sites employ access on multiple levels. The access involves multiple components and relates to several definitions, as addressed earlier regarding Mari Hvattum's quotations. An interesting question now is whether or not the issue of accessibility is a type of cultural phenomenon similar to Lie's claim. In short, this would appear to be the case.

Norway is unique in the way it prioritizes access for its citizens. In addition to the type of mental and physical matters at the Tourist Route sites, the country's social democratic political structure entitles the people of Norway to education



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and health services. Particularly with regards to health, Norway is distinct from the United States and many other countries in the way a sick or injured individual has access to the necessary medical treatment (Iversen and Kopperud 2003, Iversen and Kopperud 2005). Indeed it is a different type of access, but the process remains the same – an equal opportunity. Through interviews with Norwegians, access arose in different contexts depending on the conversation. Liv Marit Rui speaks of accessibility when explaining the living situation of Norwegians. Some citizens live on islands separated from the mainland by a body of water. An ongoing discussion involves whether or not these people should have access to the same roadways as others, in the form of bridges and sea tunnels. Rui concludes "It has been a political decision since the 1960s that everyone should have the same opportunity... So if you live on an island, it should be easy for you to come to the mainland" (Rui interview 21.08.12).

Unlike the nation's health care, the opportunity to drive is a political decision and not a legal entitlement. However, a conversation with Nina Frang Høyum at the Norway National Museum of Architecture enlightened me about the country's laws for accessibility. For the *Views: Norway Seen from the Road 1733-2020* exhibit, the centerpiece in the museum's exhibition pavilion was the working model for Carl Viggo Hølmekbakk's planned Tourist Route site above the Vøringfossen waterfall (Figure 16). Because the architect wanted to demonstrate the full length of the waterfall, the highly accurate model stood nearly 5 meters. The height required the installation of plastic stairs, which allowed viewers to climb up and into a created landscape made of EPS (expanded polystyrene styrofoam, which is a high density foam), plaster, and cardboard (Høyum 2012: 196). What struck me, in addition to the accuracy and size of the model itself, were the video cameras around the room, whose images were sporadically projected on surrounding video screens. In effect, certain screens would show a live video stream of me, standing at the top of the stairs. I asked Høyum about



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the cameras, thinking they were a prop like the room's other decorations, such as the stage set paintings on the floor. She responded this way:

There is a law in this country that everything in the public space needs to be accessible to everyone, like those in a wheelchair. We didn't know quite how to bring the wheelchairs up here [to the top of the stairs]. So we decided to put the cameras in the ceiling instead (Høyum interview 30.08.12).

Accessibility and equal opportunity therefore is a legal requirement in certain Norwegian matters. It is a national issue that infiltrates the legal system, social programs, architecture, and even museum layouts. It influences national programs and political decisions, but also appears in cultural tendencies. Designed areas intentionally play on the narrative of the accessible, inverting it and multiplying it in different ways and with varying results. The subject of accessibility, then, is as much cultural as it is logistical. It can serve as inspiration while simultaneously providing restrictive requirements. In this way, access is a Tourist Route theme as it also parallels the balance of architecture, explained earlier in this chapter. Just like landscape problems and structural limits, the role of access in Norway can be added to the list of practical constraints. The result is a matter that is culturally required as well as multi-dimensional in its application, all presented through the interpretation and intention of the architect.

#### 4.9 *Allemannsretten*

There is one additional consideration that must be understood when speaking about accessibility and design of the Tourist Route sites. It appears there is an even grander cultural phenomenon, larger than handicap-accessibility laws and regional tendencies. In nearly all of the interviews I conducted, the notion of *allemannsretten* arose in the midst of the conversation. *Allemannsretten*, directly translated as *everyone's law*, is the universal Norwegian law that gives all people

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the right to walk in nature. The law allows every person the freedom to roam across all land, whether public or private, as long as there is no destruction. Maybe it does not strongly encourage roaming, but it acts in the same way as accessibility as it provides an opportunity. There are no private property or trespassing warnings in Norway, which is a sharp contrast to legal rights and cultural norms in the United States. Not only that, but it is "a very important principle" and "Norwegians are very proud of it", according to Hvattum (Interview 27.08.12).

Does *allemannsretten* conclusively explain the design of Tourist Route sites? No. However, it does provide a necessary context in which the designs must be considered. Suddenly, it is clear why Norwegian architects say so much about balance in design, between the practical and the poetic, but more notably between a function and an intended behavioral suggestion. The designers all tend to explain their intentions explicitly with regard to the conditions in which they exist. Rather than controlling structures, the sites contain subtle influence that depends on a human's freedom. In Norway, this freedom is less philosophical than it is cultural. Often, human freedom is applicable to design. However, it typically accommodates some version of an existential exposition, such as 'Man is what he wills himself to be' (e.g. Sartre 2007). The Norwegian consideration of freedom takes a different form if we recognize a law that gives all citizens the right to roam all land. In a way, the freedom is a tangible and practical consideration, much more than a philosophical perspective. I believe it therefore enlivens the designs with an additional layer of the real, albeit in the form of a potential. Designing a rest area is then not only creating a public space, but it is also producing within the context of legal rights. This is not simply thinking about architecture as unable to control, but designing in a place where human freedom to roam is a celebrated concept.

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I began my study of the Tourist Routes without knowledge of *allemannsretten*. Still, I wondered about the extent to which architecture could influence the individuals who experience it. To resolve my consideration, I sought answers from Norwegian designers and specialists, and the way in which they spoke about the issue. What I found was a strong discourse about experiencing nature. Only by taking into account *allemannsretten* can I understand the apparent fascination with 'touching nature' or 'experiencing the natural', as well as the seemingly over-stated criticisms about separating humans from nature. When Norwegian law gives all people the right to access nature, government-funded locations that do anything but facilitate access can be startling. The reality involves a specifically Norwegian analysis of Tourist Route sites, relating not only to habits and culture, but legal rights. It therefore helps to consider *allemannsretten* in order to comprehend the frequent and often passionate responses to the Tourist Routes regarding humans in nature.

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## 5. A Cultural Example in The National Tourist Routes: Signs

This final chapter is a continuation of the previous sections. For the issue of cultural influence on the Tourist Route sites, I find it helpful to consider a specific example from my field work. Similar to the notions of man-made/natural distinction, accessibility, and *allemannsretten*, I believe an analysis of signage can illuminate a cultural component of the Tourist Routes. Although this thesis is not intended to be a comparative study, I find the differences between Norwegian and American signage to be of interest. Can we learn something from the differences? I believe so. I find the situation interesting not only in that it is dissimilar to the unnatural/natural contrast that is often found along the routes, but also because it testifies to the prioritization of a different form of communication. This chapter therefore will describe what I saw as differences between signs in United States and Norway. It will provide an explanation of the difference through a cultural and communicative analysis, and then consider what we can learn about reflection. If successful, this chapter will support another cultural component of the Tourist Routes and exemplify the clarity in Norwegian architectural form.

### 5.1 American and Norwegian Differences in Signage

One of the most notable items when driving along the Tourist Routes was the lack of signage. The absence was noticeable immediately, as I attempted to photograph the brown clover National Tourist Route signs. The designation of the route was sparsely posted at the beginning of my drive north on National Road No. 13. Luckily, the designation improved, particularly a large new brown rectangular one stating the beginning of the County Road No. 550 ("Nasjonal

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Turistveg"), and then immediately another designating "Hardanger" (for the route's name). Although I felt satisfied at that point, the initial absence seemed to be an omen of things to come.

Although the roads had frequent signs to designate 'National Tourist Route', information for an approaching rest stop was rare. Notable architectural sites such as Hereiane were an exception, notifying the driver 1 kilometer in advance. Otherwise, I often found myself turning a corner and passing an unmarked lookout location. It appeared that since the Tourist Routes have so many pull offs, a sign for each would become repetitive or even unnecessary. It also makes sense to highlight the larger, more expensive and more expressive rest areas, like Hereiane. But even considering these reasons, I still found the experience to often be inconvenient and unsafe. For one, without frequent signs to designate approaching rest areas, it is likely that tourists will underuse the simpler layoffs and overuse the grander projects. The space at these sites is generally prepared for greater tourism, but ironically, the toilets are not. My experience showed how even on a calm day at Hereiane, with only 2 other cars in the area, I needed to wait 25 minutes to use (and investigate) the 2 toilets. Add this to my experience at Stegastein, where the toilet facilities were unfortunately locked in October (offseason). In addition, I found the situation without signs to be less safe than the alternative. A sign to tell about an approaching pull off assists the driver if someone—or potentially the car in front of someone—wants to slow and turn. It would have been helpful to know if the layoffs were easy difficult turns. This distinction became most apparent when I drove the routes to the end and then returned the opposite direction. When driving southwest on County Road No. 550, for example, each rest area was conveniently on the right side, angled slightly, so it was a simple turn off. However, when driving the opposite direction, the areas were on the left side and therefore across the road, as well as angled the reverse direction. The turn off then forced me to drastically slowi

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down, cross the oncoming traffic, and turn about 110° (compared with 20°). For convenience and safety reasons, it seems the Tourist Routes would have additional signage.

My tendency is to compare the routes with the driving experience in the United States, where constant signs provide continuous information. When driving along the freeway, for instance south on Interstate 5 from Seattle, Washington to Portland, Oregon, I see a sign for the oncoming Rest Area (2 *MILES*), a sign when the Area is approaching (*REST AREA NEXT RIGHT*), and a sign saying how far until the next (*NEXT REST AREA 36 MILES*). Sometimes, the information is even presented in a narrative, such as *GETTING TIRED? REST AREA 6 MILES*. There also are signs telling the driver when designated lookouts or scenic areas are approaching, with a spot below to say if the location is open or closed (e.g. Scenic Lookout on Interstate 90, East of the Columbia River). In addition to this abundance, there are signs for the many bends and curves of the road, with arrows symbolizing the type of curve and the suggested speed. Drivers in the United States are over-informed about the conditions of the road, and this is a stark contrast to the Norwegian Tourist Routes. What first appeared to be insufficiency, however, now seems to be explained by culture.

The difference between American and Norwegian signage seemed to be more apparent at the Tourist Sites, where signs are noticeably absent. In one sense, the sites lack what I will call *positive signs*, which tell the tourist things to do and see. There is little direction to notify, for instance, that following a certain pathway reaches a lookout or a shoreline. The sites exist without the positive signs to educate and direct. Even the few sites with signs demonstrate an apparent inadequacy: At Svandalsfossen (Figure 10), the single information sign says nothing of a waterfall to English speakers, and therefore hides the site's highlight. Without knowing exactly what the area designates, a tourist is unlikely to travel up the stairway, over the rock steps, across the bridge, along the path,

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and then to the massive, majestic top of the waterfall. There is no specific information on the area, its history, the waterfall and fjord. It is essentially a signless site.

Furthermore, the Tourist Route sites lack *negative signs*, announcements of what is not allowed. If the few positive signs come as a surprise, then the complete absence of negative signs is astonishing. Nothing warns tourists of danger, of parking their car too long, of throwing away trash, of watching their step. These are all statements expected in similar public areas of the United States. My experience in Yellowstone National Park reveals postings, such as this recent one, stating: *FIRE RESTRICTIONS: DUE TO EXTREME FIRE DANGER. NO Campfires, Wood Stoves or Briquette Fires Allowed. NO Use of Chainsaws, Generators of other Internal Combustion Engines Allowed without an Approved, Working Maintained Spark Arrestor. NO Smoking Allowed.* There also is ubiquitous signage saying to not feed the wildlife, not leave children unattended, not honk your horn, not litter, not stay overnight, not forget to pay camping fees, not trespass, not park in more than one space, not leave your food scraps out overnight, and not cross the fence. My experience in America has made me accustomed to signs. It seems the logic in the United States is that signs declare rules and rules are necessary. The rules presumably prevent wildfires and lost children and exploitation. More importantly, rules shift the liability from the location to the users, so that if something unfortunate does occur, the visitor is at fault. Differences between American and Norwegian signage, for both positive and negative signs, appear to be a difference in culture. Similar types of locations have unique differences. The next section will address what these signage differences can reveal about the cultures and their form of communication.

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## 5.2 Communication

The scarcity of positive and negative signs, both on the road and at the sites, initially seems to support how the Tourist Routes are insufficient and unsafe. However, in reflection, this is not the conclusion I wish to draw. The issue of signs cannot be isolated from the context of the country, nor from the previous proposals in this thesis. For instance, we must ask the question: Are signs anything more than statements? The answer is both yes and no. On the most basic level, signs and statements are modes of communication, intended to say or symbolize something. But explicit words and warnings distinguish signs from statements of form. Linguistic communication is strongly present in the United States National Parks and absent on Norway's National Tourist Routes. Although it is my opinion that the Tourist Route sites could be improved with educational information, I would be wrong to imply that there is a complete lack of communication in these areas. Architecture, as I have argued in my Theory section, can say something just as a sign can say something. The Tourist Routes therefore seem to embody a cultural norm that communicates without written signs.

At the staircased waterfall site, Svandalsfossen (Figure 10), there is a narrative even without a written description. The definitive feature of the stairway is its material: rusted steel that flashes bronze or orange or brown, depending on the light. The stairs are a distinct highlight of built material against the powerfully natural site. They are solid and sharp, accentuating their edges atop the rolling rock and pouring water, and amidst the backdrop of the calm, vast fjord. As their rusted color suggests, they refer to an antique or rustic corridor, which promptly angles up and around the nature. There is no doubt the designers (Haga Grov and Helge Schelderup) are playing with the material, intentionally antiquating a new structure in color and texture, but not in form. Metal planks shake and sing at each step, giving the visitor a sensation of climbing into an engine room.





*Figure 10: Svandalsfossen Stairway - Designed by Haga Grov and Helge Schelderup*

With clear imagery, the look and feel of the architectural object alludes to an industrial past. Still, the allusion is one that incorporates access to, rather than control of, nature and views. I could not help but contrast this constructed and natural balance with other areas along the drive, where waterfalls had been piped in order to produce local energy. Instead of containing this water flow of Svandalsfossen, the industrial construction cuts around it and prioritizes it. The lines of the steps draw the visitor's sight and movement towards the fjord water and the waterfall. The steps frame the natural and encourage access to it. Haga Grov and Helge Schelderup's design is able to communicate on two levels, one providing a narrative about the area, and another suggesting movement by the tourist. Interestingly, signs similarly seek to communicate on these two levels. Therefore, Svandalsfossen is a valuable example of the way architectural design replaces—and therefore, acts as—the Tourist Route's signs. In other words, the

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site does not require written information about the region's industrial past or a signal to mark '*This Way to the Waterfall*' – such messages are contained in the architectural object.

A similar example is the Nappskaret site in the Lofoten Islands, designed by the firm *Jarmund/Vignæs AS*. Described as a "Lookout point, hiking path" (Berre and Lysholm 2010: 74), the site consists of a simple electric yellow-colored key-clamp railing that runs along the trail (Figure 11). It is this design that interests Hvattum, who finds it unique in the way it avoids the aesthetic viewpoint.

There is a scaffolding bar railing that winds its way into the landscape. And the emphasis here is not on the view... What they actually do is emphasize the idea of walking with this strangely crude, strangely improvised, almost industrial-looking ensemble in the landscape, which I like. You know they are circumventing some expectations about beauty and about nature, and also about the passivity of turning nature into a sort of picture post card view (Hvattum interview 27.08.12).



*Figure 11: Nappskaret Railing - Designed by Jarmund/Vignæs  
(<http://www.vegvesen.no/Turistveg/lofoten/Utforte+anlegg>)*

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The simple construction makes for a simple message: *Follow This Pathway*. It is the smallest project ever completed by Jarmund/Vigsnæs, and it appears to exist as a most basic demonstration of clear architectural communication. Einar Jarmund explains the type of communication when he describes the design:

It is basically just a railing. But it is an attempt to create an obvious message to whoever is looking at it. We didn't want a sign saying that you can stop here to have a view. We wanted the architecture to tell that whole story (Jarmund speech 03.05.12).

So, like the steps at Svandalsfossen, the railing at Nappskaret performs its communicative message through the designed object, rather than signs.

It is here that I can make a striking contrast between Norway and the United States. It is this same distinction that struck me when I realized that Stegastein was part of a national tourist program. Since, like I explained in the Introduction, a definitive distinction in Norwegian and American tourism is on display in the difference between the Tourist Routes and Las Vegas. Although this is not a comparative study and the locations are incomparable in many ways, Las Vegas in America and the National Tourist Route sites in Norway are telling examples in the way they incorporate signs. The differences may seem too great for any discourse on the issue. However, there is a common ground if we speak particularly about signs and spaces. This discourse originated in the work of Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, architects who created significant controversy with their 1977 book *Learning from Las Vegas*. With this book, which resulted from a Yale University research project in 1968, the architects analyze the Las Vegas Strip in complete seriousness, paying particular attention to symbolism. One subject that garners much attention is the form of communication in Las Vegas – communication that is extravagantly American in its dependence on signs. What Venturi, Brown and Izenour immediately assert is that Las Vegas architecture prioritizes communication instead of space, and accomplishes this with extreme signage.

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The sign for the Motel Monticello, a silhouette of an enormous Chippendale highboy, is visible on the highway before the motel itself. This architecture of styles and signs is antispacial; it is an architecture of communication over space; communication dominates space as an element in the architecture and in the landscape (Venturi, Brown & Izenour 1977: 8).

In this form, the presentation of architectural communication in Las Vegas seems to be an absolute contrast to the Tourist Route sites. Norway's scarce signage and a specific attention to specific landscapes and areas distinguish it from this example at the American tourist destination. If the architecture of signs makes Las Vegas antispacial, then the Tourist Routes seem to be an architecture of space and no signs. However, even as Norwegian designers prioritize the space and the landscape, this does not mean architecture lacks communication. I have argued how the Tourist Route sites demonstrate a different form of communication, one that comes from design instead of signs. Signage, in Las Vegas, provides the symbolic form to designate a building's role. *Learning from Las Vegas* describes how the exaggerated highway signs identify places through "scriptural forms or pictorial silhouettes" (Venturi, Brown & Izenour 1977: 13). The result is a location where signs dominate as the only form of communication. Architecture, then, becomes insufficient.

Architecture is not enough. Because the spatial relationships are made by symbols more than by forms, architecture in this landscape [like Las Vegas] becomes symbol in space rather than form in space. Architecture defines very little. ... The sign is more important than the architecture (Venturi, Brown & Izenour 1977: 13).

In Las Vegas, communication comes entirely from the sign. The building is merely a box in the back.

It is worth noting that *Learning from Las Vegas* was written before the city's 1990s building boom. From the new construction, architecture and its form has a larger role in communicating to the visitor. Las Vegas is no longer only a city of

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signs. The newer and more southern section of The Strip, with *New York, New York's* faux skyline, *The Luxor's* pyramid, and *Venetian's* Italian ornament (to name only a few), is not simply an 'extravagant-sign-in-the-front, modest-building-in-the-back' formula. Still, the conclusion in *Learning from Las Vegas* applies. Not only does the older Las Vegas still stand, but the landscape remains anti-spatial even with the new additions. Nowadays, instead of *no place* if you remove the signs, as Venturi, Brown and Izenour say (1977: 18), there is only *confused place* – one with Italy, France, New York, Egypt, and the Tropics referenced through blatant and cliché architectural motifs.

### 5.3 Signs: Reflective Implications

One might ask how the issue of signage relates to architecture and intended design. The connection appears distant and slightly vague. However, it seems the lack of signs in the Tourist Route sites support an idea presented throughout this thesis – the phenomenon of reflection. Without signs, and therefore along the Norwegian Tourist Routes, the visitor is forced towards reflection in a unique manner. Discovery, whether of a location or of an idea, happens when a visitor is solving a puzzle instead of following a regulation. Many of the Tourist Route sites elevate the visitor in this manner, considering their reflection and experience to be critical to the design. This reality is most clear in the absence of positive signs, and therefore is particularly relevant to the situation in the United States. For, the difference is this: frequent postings about a SCENIC LOOKOUT in America, contrasted with wondering what the smooth, jolting, wooden platform is among the treed Western Norwegian hillside. Sign-less places are unique because they encourage personal access, either in a sensation, consideration, or reflection. Stegastein's platform draws attention to vertigo and the individual role in that feeling. The toilet at Akkarvikodden twists the issue of

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a space, alluding to the surroundings while simultaneously providing a sanctuary wrap. Svandalsfossen refers to an industrial history with its metal steps that provide a pathway to nature with the same feeling as climbing a ladder to a mechanical room. While the results may differ, the unsigned areas do not confine the visitor's feelings. At the same time, they suggest certain items of communication. It therefore is not surprising that at least one Norwegian architect explains the viewer's interpretive role. In an interview with the think tank New Nordic, Einar Jarmund says this regarding his firm's philosophy:

Architecture is made when someone looks at it. There is always a person that has his or her own story – his or her own relationship to that which influences his or her experience of architecture. Which means we can't control what people think when they look at our architecture (Jarmund Speech 11.07.12).

Such an appeal to the user's perspective is contrary to the character of a posted sign. At best, a sign can ask questions to its reader that relate to the provided information. In most cases though, it contains only information and rules. Rather than encourage a discovery or subjective interpretation, signs provide facts. This notion relates aforementioned idea that architecture along the Tourist Routes is suggestive but not controlling. Design contains intentional forms and narratives, but no architect or analyst is willing to say it can control the user. In a pragmatic way, the architecture can attempt to produce feelings or barriers, just like it can try to refer to objects and history. Still, there is no way to guarantee this force. It is an extension of the architect's ambitious yet realistic intentions, with a priority of solving problems. Throughout the process, there is a consideration for the user. In some cases, the consideration involves facilitating access to areas and sensations. Other times, the consideration portrays how a designed architectural object is subject to a human's subjective interpretation and inherent freedom.

It is therefore in the character of the National Tourist Routes that architects demonstrate their practical realization – the use and meaning of architecture



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comes necessarily from the visitor. In the first chapter, this thesis argued that architecture is unavoidably used by others, who interpret symbols and attribute meaning to otherwise static constructions. In such a way, architecture is like art, where its meaning requires a viewer to move past the plane of *object-as-it-is* to the plane of *object-as-it-means-to-be*. The Tourist Routes exemplify the realistic recognition of the tourist's role, with the lack of signs, the intentional design, and the relation to art. Occasionally, the sites are compared to art, for instance when Wilhelmsen likens his Stegastein platform with an 'art installation in the landscape' (Speech 30.03.09). It is an idea that recognizes the agency within the architecture to perform upon the viewer, which in effect allows for a unique balance between the design, the object, and the tourist. One could understand that Tourist Route sights, with their lack of signs, as characterizing a trust for the visitor. But if we think of architecture like Pickering (1995) thinks of science, then a better conclusion can be reached. Norwegian architects display great confidence in the impact of their designs, yet are pragmatic enough to recognize their limitations. There appears to be—in assumptions, discourse, and design—an inherent balance between the architect and the architecture, and between the architecture and the user. All are performing upon the others, but not controlling. Each has agency in its own right, but not so much that it imposes upon the freedom of the others.

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## 6. Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I presented my original inspiration to study the National Tourist Routes of Norway. I posed the questions that directed my research, about how architecture presents nature and what we can learn from a close investigation of design intention of the Tourist Routes. Then I supplied a background about this Norwegian tourist project and its intended goals. In the Methodology section, I explained my choice of a qualitative case study method, to analyze intention and meaning, and how I collected data from published information, firsthand visits to sites, and interviews. I reflected upon my methodology, and how my research focus changed from considering architecture in isolation to analyzing it with care of cultural and philosophical topics. My description then shifted to Theory, where I defined architecture as 'the practice of designing and constructing buildings' and as 'a style of a building'. I sought to avoid some common presuppositions in architectural discourse, and so I explained how architecture can say something, architects are saying something, and architecture can do something. These theoretical sections first argued how objects can be statements, then resolved the issue of intention to involve architects in architecture, and finally addressed issues of meaning with examples from art and literature. The conclusion was how architecture can have agency and a designer can direct that influence.

I used Chapter 2 to present the historical background on the issues of landscape and architecture. I described landscape's linguistic origin, and how it is intimately connected to changing human perspectives. A shortened history was used to define important terminology like 'beautiful', 'sublime' and 'picturesque', and concluded how landscape can be symbolic and representative of nations. Then, I related the National Tourist Routes to landscape by presenting different interpretations of the sites. This section introduced an idea that the Tourist Routes are complex and exist as both part of a history and unique in their own right.



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Next, I narrated a short history of architecture, paying particular attention to how buildings relate to nature. I concluded the historical chapter with information about the Bauhaus, which showed three things: One, an example where designers intentionally related to nature; two, a way to reconcile apparent contradictions of built and natural; and three, a case where architecture is on one hand embedded in a specific culture and time period, but on another, free to exert its specific philosophy.

I introduced National Tourist Route criticisms in Chapter 3. I began with Bertram Brochmann's critique and analyzed its accuracy. I determined this particular criticism to be sometimes insufficient and other times altogether incorrect, which seemed to demonstrate public misinformation and the difficulty generalizing about the Tourist Routes. Then I used part of Brochmann's critique to question sustainability. I concluded that architects speak particularly about sustainability, but only with regard to items they control, which demonstrates their role and responsibility. Finally, I described some historical cases of technology in nature, showing some similar yet contradictory arguments for nature protection. The variety of cases helped demonstrate the complexity of interpretations, and questioned which view of nature is presented by the Tourist Routes.

Chapter 4 is where I analyzed architecture in the Tourist Routes. I started by considering one view of architecture that seems undercommunicated – that it involves practical solutions to problems. I provided several examples where the design of Tourist Route sites directly accounts for an aesthetic, safety, or environmental problem. If architecture involves practical solutions to problems, it demonstrates a complexity that many criticisms ignore. In the following section, I sought to clarify how architecture is not only practical or functional. Several examples proposed to show how architecture contains additional qualities or beauty or poeticism that makes it unique. However, I wanted to avoid defining architecture as this because I feel this balance makes Tourist Route sites unique.

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At the end of the section, I argued that architecture communicates, whether a poetic narrative or merely a practical function. From this section, I could move to the next that explained the intentional designs of architects. The intentions were to affect the users, creating spaces that produced feelings and sensations, as well as personal reflection. This section about intention introduced how architects were cognizant of human freedom and the way architecture could relate to existential considerations. I expanded this notion of freedom and control in the following section, where I investigated a design's capability to influence. With philosophical examples, I sought to explain how a simplistic perspective of control fails to account for human freedom. I then applied these notions of freedom and control to specific Tourist Route architecture, in an analysis of how much design can influence in the midst of necessary human freedom. I used examples of when architecture provides suggestions for behavior and reflections, but not control. Each instance demonstrates how the architects were aware of their position. I transitioned back to the question of technology in nature in the following section, to ponder whether the Tourist Routes are a part of a Capitalistic discourse. My conclusion was an explanation of the Tourist Routes as a different type of program – not simply money-making, but something distinct. I argue in the next section that the Norwegian tourist program is best explained with a cultural view, particularly, a distinction between synthetic and natural. But this idea seemed to complicate earlier notions of technology in nature. I therefore needed to clarify the discourse about built objects in nature, so that it could interestingly connect to a certain symbolic and access-enabling objects. What this section also seemed to show was not only complexity, but the crucial importance of intended design. With the cultural component introduced, I explained the influence of accessibility on the Tourist Routes in Norway. I connected the accessibility of the sites with the national attitudes and laws about access, particularly for people and to places. Finally, I referred to *allemannsretten* in the final section as a necessary way to consider the Tourist Route architecture.

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Cultural ideas about nature, access, and *allemannsretten* provide an important context for the designs incorporating mental and physical influence.

In Chapter 5, I used the previous cultural component to consider signage differences between Norway and the United States. The first section was where I described the differences I have experienced regarding signs to inform (*positive signs*) as well as signs to restrict (*negative signs*). The next section, I considered the issue of signs in terms of culture, after questioning if a sign is anything more than a statement. With the theoretical idea that architecture can incorporate statements, I concluded that Tourist Route sites lack signs, but instead communicate with architectural form. I argued how design provides a narrative and direction in locations, just like written signs. The Tourist Routes are therefore unique in their mode of communication, which occurs in intentional designed objects and spaces. I concluded with a final section, linking the topic of signs with the issue of reflection. From earlier connections between art, freedom, philosophy, and design intention, I showed how a lack of signs is consequently a cultural demonstration. Norwegian National Tourist Route sites communicate through designs instead of signs. The Tourist Routes, in their variety, practicality, influence, consideration, balance and reflexivity, therefore contain intentional designs that reveal recognition of architecture's complexity.

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Hvattum, Marit. Architectural historian and theorist. Oslo School of Architecture, Oslo: August 27, 2012.

Lie, Tanja. Architect. Lie Øyen Arkitekter, Oslo: August 27, 2012.

Rui, Liv Marit. Archaeologist and cultural heritage advisor. Sentrum, Oslo: August 21, 2012.

Støle, Alf Erlend. Landscape architect. Sentrum, Oslo: August 21, 2012.

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## Appendix 1 – National Tourist Route Architects

(A) = Architect (LA) = Landscape Architect

Gornitak, Varanger: (A) Margrete Frills (LA) Berg & Dyring

Selvika, Havøysund: (A) Reiulf Ramstad Arkitekter AS

Lillefjord, Havøysund: (A) PUSHAK arkitekter

Snefjord, Havøysund: (A) PUSHAK arkitekter

Tungeneset, Senja: (A) Code arkitektur (LA) Aurora Landskap

Bergsbotn, Senja: (A) Code arkitektur

Kleivødden, Andøya: (LA) Landskapsfabrikken

Børra, Andøya: (A) Morfeus arkitekter AS

Grunnfjør, Lofoten: (A) 70° Nord

Gårdsvatnet, Lofoten: (A) 70° Nord

Storeidvatnet, Lofoten: (A) 70° Nord

Austnesfjorden, Lofoten: (LA) Landskapsfabrikken

Gimsøystraumen, Lofoten: (A) Jarmund/Vigsnaes AS

Torvdalshalsen, Lofoten: (A) 70° Nord

Eggum, Lofoten: (A) Snøhetta AS

Nappskaret, Lofoten: (A) Jarmund/Vigsnaes AS

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Rambergstranda, Lofoten: (A) Askim/Lantto arkitekter as

Skreda, Lofoten: (A) manthey kula

Akkarvikodden, Lofoten: (A) manthey kula (LA) Landskapsfabrikken

Ågskaret, Helgelandstysten nord: (LA) Landskapsfabrikken

Jektvik, Helgelandstysten nord: (A) Carl-Viggo Hølmebakk, manthey kula

Hellåga, Helgelandstysten nord: (A) Nordplan AS (LA) Landskapsfabrikken

Myrbaerholmen, Atlanterhavsvegen: (A) manthey kula

Askvågen, Atlanterhavsvegen: (A) 3RW Arkitekter (LA) Smedsvig

Landskapsarkitekter AS

Kjekska Atlanterhavsvegen: (A) 3RW Arkitekter (LA) Smedsvig

Landskapsarkitekter AS

Trollstigen, Geiranger/Trollstigen: (A) Reiulf Ramstad Arkitekter AS (LA)

Multiconsult

Gudbrandsjuvet, Geiranger/Trollstigen: (A) Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor

Juvelandshotell, Geiranger/Trollstigen: (A) Jensen & Skodvin

Arkitektkontor (LA) Multiconsult

Linge fergekai, Geiranger/Trollstigen: (A) Knut Hjeltne AS Sivilarkitekter

Ørnesvingen, Geiranger/Trollstigen: (A) 3 RW Arkitekter (LA) Smedsvig

Landskapsarkitekter AS (Artist) May Eikås Bjerk

Flydalsjuvet, Geiranger/Trollstigen: (LA) Smedsvig Landskapsarkitekter AS

Videfossen, Gamle Strynefjellsvegen: (A) Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor

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Øvstefossen, Gamle Strynefjellsvegen: (A) Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor

Liasanden, Sognefjellet: (A) Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor

Mefjellet, Sognefjellet: (A) Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor (Artist) Knut  
Wold [Art Consultant and Director]

Vegaskjelet, Sognefjellet: (A) Carl-Viggo Hølmebakk

Nedre Oscarshaug, Sognefjellet: (A) Carl-Viggo Hølmebakk

Likholefossen, Gaularfjellet: (A) Nordplan AS

Utsikten, Gaularfjellet (plan): (A) Code arkitektur (LA) Dronninga Landskap AS

Dragsvik, Gaularfjellet (plan): (A & LA) KAP

Vedahaugane, Aurlandsfjellet: (A & LA) LJB AS (Artist) Mark Dion

Flotane, Aurlandsfjellet: (A & LA) LJB AS

Stegastein, Aurlandsfjellet: (A) Todd Saunders/Tommie Wilhelmsen

Vøringsfossen, Hardanger (plan): (A) Carl-Viggo Hølmebakk

Kvanndal, Hardanger: (A) Sivilarkitekt Tordis Hoem as

Steinstøberget, Hardanger: (A) Sivilarkitekt Tordis Hoem as

Hereiane, Hardanger: (A) Asplan Viak, 3RW

Svandalsfossen, Ryfylke : (A) Haga Grov / Helge Schjelderup Sivilarkitekter  
MNAL as

Ropeid, Ryfylke: (A) Jensen & Skodvin Arkitektkontor

Kvassheim, Jaeren: (A) Helge Schjelderup Sivilarkitekter AS

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Nye Vandrehjemmet, Valdresflye: (A) NUNO Arkitektur AS (LA) Bjarne Aasen

Vargbakkane, Valdresflye: (A) Knut Hjetnes AS Sivilarkitekter

Rjupa, Valdresflye: (A) Knut Hjetnes AS Sivilarkitekter

Båtskaret nord, Valdresflye: (A) Lie Øyen Arkitekter

Strømbu, Rondane: (A) Carl-Viggo Hølmebakk

Sohlbergplassen, Rondane: (A) Carl-Viggo Hølmebakk



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## Appendix 2 – Sample Interview Request

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Beck Roan and I am currently a Masters Student at the University of Oslo. I intend to write my thesis on the National Tourist Routes in Norway, specifically, the relationship between design and nature. I wish to examine the extent to which architects intentionally designed the landscape, viewpoints, and buildings along the routes in accordance with nature, and if this at all reflects Norwegian values. My research indicates that your firm designed the rest area at \_\_\_\_\_, along the \_\_\_\_\_ route. I was curious if anyone who worked on the project would be willing to answer questions about the design of the area and structure. I am happy to meet in person or correspond through email- my intention not only to educate myself, but also to reference your ideas in my thesis. Given the lack of scholarly material on the Tourist Route designs, I would greatly appreciate any assistance.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your response.

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## Appendix 3 – Interview Question List

### Questions: Design of the Architecture – Role of Nature

What were the guidelines from the National Tourist Route Project committee or government members? Were you allowed freedom in your design or was there significant structure and rules governing what you could and could not do?

What was the philosophy in working with the terrain of the site? Did you attempt to work around it? Play with it? Minimize your impact on it? Was this project and philosophy regarding the terrain different from previous work of yours (and if so, why)?

How much did the location/site influence the architecture and its form? Did the location suggest certain symbols? Is the design subordinate or heavily influenced by the site?

What was the position nature took in the design process? Was it the absolute priority? Was it a foundation or idea from which you expanded? Was it something in the background? Were there specific instructions from the National Tourist Route committees about what you should (or should not) do to the nature?

What are you trying to show the viewer? Are you trying to impact him/her in any specific way? If so, can you explain the ways in which you are doing or showing? Are there aspects you wish the tourist would recognize or understand, but often go unnoticed? Are there specific symbols or allusions or historical references in your work?

Can you explain the following for the National Tourist Route building you designed:

1. Design philosophy

- 
2. Design intentions
  3. Design process
  4. The result

Does your architecture along the Tourist Routes provide a narrative? Does it represent a symbol or an idea or a locale or a culture? If so, can you explain.

Are there ways in which your architecture reflects Norway and Norwegian culture?

How much are you controlling the tourist and how much are you allowing him/her freedom? Are you directing and showing and presenting specific ideas about the site's form, the place's culture, the landscape? Or are you providing a backdrop for him to explore, be free, move about, make his own conclusions and judgments?

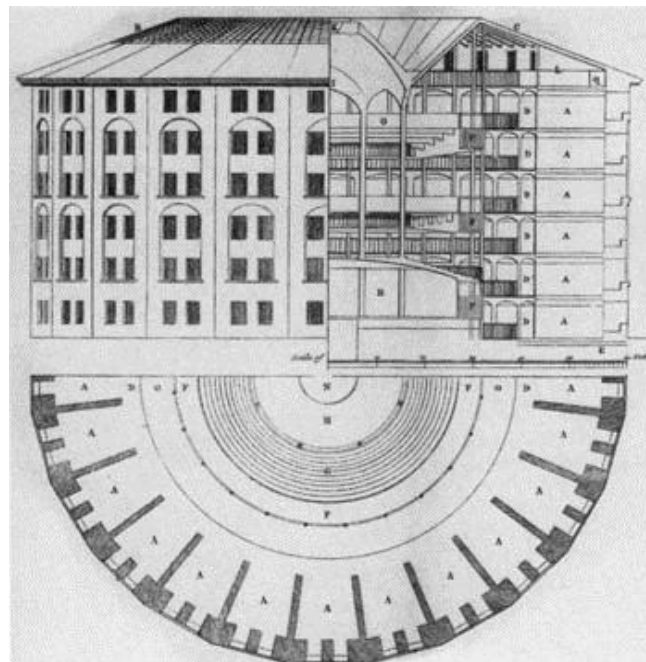
What can you say about the 'sustainability' of the Tourist Route Project and your work in particular?

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## Appendix 4 – Additional Figures



*Figure 12: Hereiane Toilet – Designed by Asplan Viak and 3RW*



*Figure 13: Plan for Bentham's Panopticon (1798) – Drawn by Willey Reveley*  
(<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/Panopticon.jpg>)

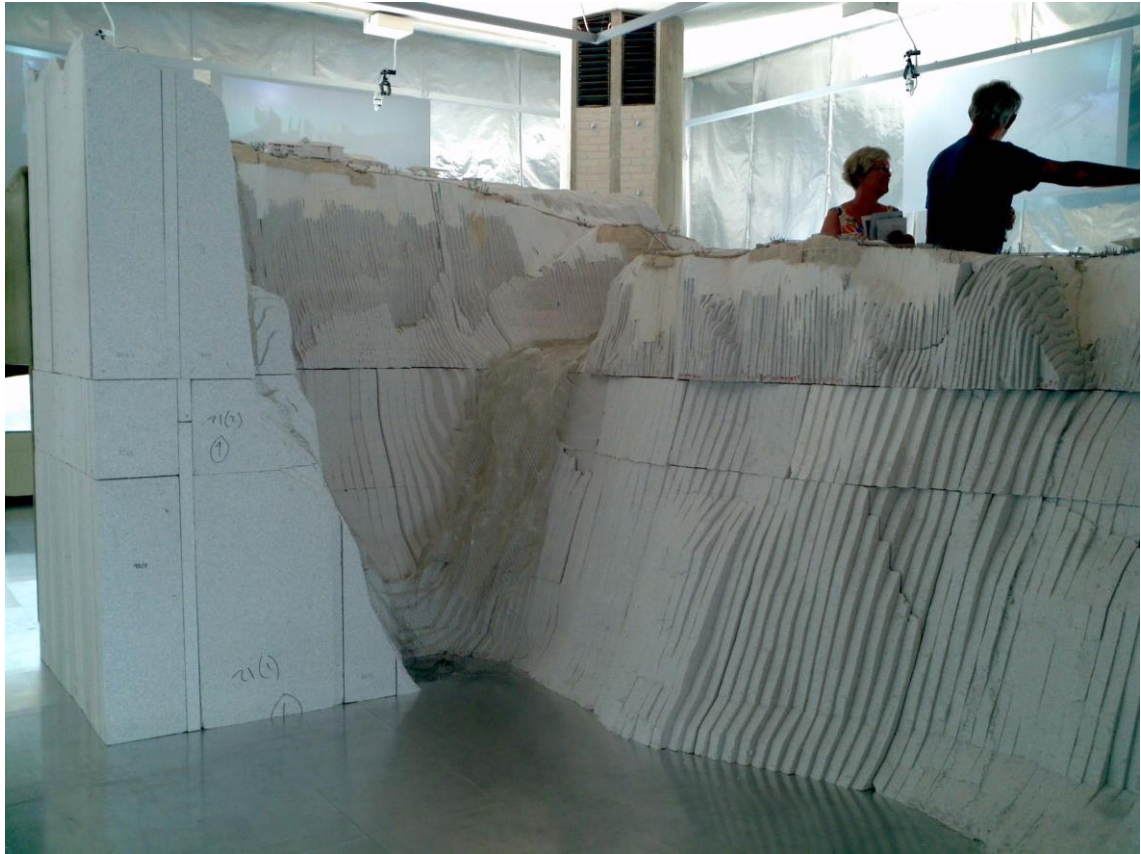




*Figure 14: Senja Ramp - Designed by CODE  
(<http://www.nasjonaleturistveger.no/en/senja/tungeneset>)*



*Figure 15: Gudbrandsjuvet Viewing Platform - Designed by Jensen & Skodvin  
(<http://www.nasjonaleturistveger.no/en/geiranger-trollstigen/gudbrandsjuvet#img4>)*



*Figure 16: Views Norway Seen from the Road 1733-2020 exhibit –  
Carl Viggo Hølmebakk's Model for Vøringfossen*